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DE QUINCEY'S

Joan of Arc  
and

The English Mail-Coach



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THOMAS DE QUINCEY

The Riverside Literature Series

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JOAN OF ARC  
AND  
THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

BY  
THOMAS DE QUINCEY

EDITED FOR STUDY BY

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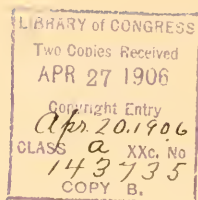


HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

Boston : 4 Park Street ; New York : 85 Fifth Avenue

Chicago : 378-388 Wabash Avenue

The Riverside Press, Cambridge



PR 4534  
J5  
1906a

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## PREFACE

It cannot be denied that De Quincey's prose offers many difficulties to young readers. To them those comparisons and allusions which his quick, resourceful mind compassed with a single bound often present but the discouraging necessity of ferreting out unfamiliar facts and relating them by associations which are, at best, but "new hatched to the woeful time." The notes, therefore, have been made more numerous than the strictest pedagogical orthodoxy might approve in order to clear the way for a free, unhampered response to the life and color, music and magic of these two essays.

So true is it that De Quincey's prose, like Milton's poetry, must be *heard* to be appreciated, that it is hardly necessary to express the hope that some good reader may, at the outset, read the essays aloud to the class. Then may follow at discretion such lines of study as are suggested by the introduction.

Some apology is, perhaps, due for the elementary character of the outlines for the study of De Quincey's style and the criticism of any essay. These topics were honestly developed in actual classroom work in an attempt to encourage pupils to discuss an author's style; and, readily remembered in their logical order, they succeeded in assisting even the most inarticulate student to express some personal appreciation of a whole essay or of passages selected here and there for criticism.

But better than being glib about the style of *Joan of Arc* and *The English Mail-Coach* is being impressed by their power; and it is the sincere wish of the editor that those who use this volume will frankly discard any part of its equipment that does not make for that end.

R. ADELAIDE WITHAM.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,  
December 20, 1905.



# CONTENTS

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	PAGE
EDITOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	v
THE LIFE OF THOMAS DE QUINCEY . . . . .	vii
THE ESSAY AS A LITERARY FORM . . . . .	xxxii
THE STRUCTURE AND STYLE OF "JOAN OF ARC" AND "THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH" . . . . .	xxxviii
OUTLINE FOR GENERAL STUDY OF AN ESSAY . . . . .	xlix
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	lii
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE . . . . .	liii
JOAN OF ARC . . . . .	1
THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH . . . . .	27
EXPLANATORY NOTES . . . . .	73



## THE LIFE OF THOMAS DE QUINCEY

A CERTAIN critic of the literary work of Thomas De Quincey has observed that the rule of all his autobiographic writing might be shortly summed up thus: "I shall be honest, strictly honest, in all that I reveal of myself; but I cannot reveal all." Small wonder is it, then, that it has been well-nigh impossible for the biographer to reveal fully the inner life of this man who baffled even himself. One thinks for a moment that he has De Quincey's genius accurately labelled and settled, when suddenly a new power, or an unguessed passion, manifests itself, and all is to be readjusted. Undeniably, he was all his life an impenetrable being; not so much a comprehensible personality as "a strange bunch of sensitive and intellectual nerves, over which the phenomena of the world could creep with the certainty of a keen response, and that could secrete thoughts and fantasies."<sup>1</sup> To show sympathetically what were some of those "responses" and "fantasies," rather than to give exhaustive information or final judgment, is the purpose of this sketch of the life and work of De Quincey.

First, let us acknowledge the introduction to the man himself so happily furnished by Mr. Thadworth Hodgson in his essay entitled *The Genius of De Quincey*.

"He came, the bard, a little Druid sight  
Of withered aspect; but his eye was keen,  
With sweetness mixed. In russet brown bedight,  
As is his sister of the copses green,  
He crept along, unpromising of mien.  
Gross he who judges so! His soul was fair,  
Bright as the children of yon azure sheen.  
True comeliness, which nothing can impair,  
Dwells in the mind: all else is vanity and glare."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Masson.

<sup>2</sup> From Thomson's *Castle of Indolence*; the description of the bard Philomelus.

For the origin of De Quincey's family we may make authority of the insistent correction which, as a boy of sixteen, **Family** he offered to His Majesty, George the Third. The king, acknowledging the presentation of the lad, intimated that his name showed him to be of French extraction. "Your family came into England with the Huguenots at the revocation of the edict of Nantes?" inquired the king graciously.

"Please your Majesty, the family has been in England since the Conquest," was the reply.

"And how do you know that?"

"From Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle*," came the ready response.

And the king, smiling, acquiesced, "I know; I know."

"What it was that he knew," De Quincey adds, "long afterwards puzzled me to conjecture." Probably the king, who prided himself on his knowledge of genealogy, knew that he did not mean to be caught in ignorance by a slip of a lad who had just stopped his game of whirling stones to doff his cap to royalty. However that may be, the De Quinceys were originally of the district of Quinc  in Normandy, and, coming to England with William the Conqueror, had risen there to some distinction. A branch of this same stock, emigrating to New England, became the forbears of American statesmen and men of letters. They, as did their brothers in England, dropped the *de*. De Quincey's father always signed himself plain Thomas Quincey; and it was after all his son, who so hotly denied recent French extraction, who reverted to the French prefix.

Thomas Quincey is described by his son as "a merchant — not in the Scotch sense, where it might mean only one who sold vegetables from a cellar, but in the English **Parents** sense of a man engaged in foreign commerce in America or the West Indies." These business ventures must have succeeded, for his English home was established on a liberal basis, as the son bears witness. "We, the children of the house, stood upon the very happiest tier in the social scaffolding for all good influences. The prayer of Azur — *Give me neither poverty nor riches* — was realized for us. That blessing we had, being neither too high nor too low. High enough we were to see models of good manners; obscure enough to be left in the securest of solitudes." But even prosperity could not purchase the presence among them of him who provided so

well for his children. "When only seven," De Quincey writes, "odd as it sounds, I had a brother and a father, neither of whom would have been able to challenge me as a relative, nor I him, had we happened to meet on the public roads." Ill health kept the father for years abroad, and allowed him only an occasional visit to England. One of his son's earliest recollections was the arrival home of the invalid "one summer evening of unusual solemnity." The children had watched for his carriage for a long while, but it came along the avenue so noiselessly that their first impression was of "the emerging of the horses' heads from the deep gloom of the lane; the next, the mass of white pillows against which the dying patient was reclining." "And this," De Quincey adds, "was the sole memorial which restores my father's image to me as a personal reality; otherwise he would have been for me a bare *nominis umbra*." If we look to the father for literary ability we find it evidenced in only one book, *A Short Tour in the Midland Counties*, — brief, businesslike observations upon the farming, manufactures, and mining of the districts visited, lightened by a few poetic touches that foreshadow his son's genius. Of his mother, a Miss Penson, De Quincey writes: "Though unpretending to the name and honors of a *literary* woman, I shall presume to call her (what many literary women are not) an *intellectual* woman:" and her letters, if published, he doubts not would have been as "racy and fresh" as those of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Of this union came eight children, of which Thomas, the fifth, was born in Manchester on the 15th of August, **Birth,** 1785. A few weeks later, the family removed to "a **1785** pretty rustic dwelling" known as "The Farm," and thence before long to a larger country estate called "Greenhay."

The record of De Quincey's life from its earliest years — for he tells us that a "dawning sense of the infinite brooded over" him from the time he was *two* years old — is pecu- **Childhood** liarily a record of emotions and reflections. No autobiography has ever clothed itself so densely in the atmosphere of revery and dream as have those sketches which he has left of his youth. He singles out for us four special blessings of his childhood: that he lived in rustic solitude; that this solitude was in England; that his infant feelings were moulded by the gentlest of sisters and not by "horrid pugilistic brothers;"

and that he and they were dutiful and loving members of a "pure, holy, and magnificent Church."

Of his love of solitude in his sixth year he says: "Now began to unfold themselves the consolations of solitude. . . . All day long I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house or in the neighboring fields. The awful stillness sometimes of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of gray or misty afternoons, — these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods, into the desert air, I gazed, as if some comfort lay in them."

The words "the gentlest of sisters" conjure up the touching pictures of the little Jane and Elizabeth, whose deaths colored his outlook upon life. "I was sad for Jane's absence. But still in my heart I trusted that she would come again. Summer and winter came again — crocuses and roses; why not little Jane?" For his second experience of death even solitude could give no comfort. Creeping alone to the room where Elizabeth lay in death, standing by her bedside, rapt upon the beauty of her face, he passed into a trance-like dream that we can but feel was the prototype of all those moments of intense feeling that have given us his most beautiful rhapsodies. He describes it in his sketches: "A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up forever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft forever; and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but *that* also ran before us and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on forever and ever."

Such visions came to him during the services at church. "There, while the congregation knelt through the long litany, as often as we came to the passage where God is supplicated in behalf of 'all sick persons and young children' . . . I wept in secret; and, raising my streaming eyes to the upper windows of the galleries, saw, on days when the sun was shining, a spectacle as affecting as ever prophet can have beheld. The sides of the windows were rich with storied glass: . . . there were the apostles that had trampled upon earth. . . . There were the martyrs that had borne witness to the truth through flames. . . . There were the saints who had glorified God by meek submission to His



will. And all the time . . . I saw through the wide central field of the window . . . white fleecy clouds sailing over the azure depths of the sky: were it but a fragment or a hint of such a cloud, immediately under the flash of my sorrow-haunted eye, it grew and shaped itself into visions of beds with white lawny curtains; and in the bed lay sick children; . . . God, for some mysterious reason, could not suddenly release them from pain; but he suffered the beds, as it seemed, slowly to rise through the clouds; slowly the beds ascended into the chambers of the air; slowly, also, his arms descended from the heavens, that he and his young children, whom in Palestine, once and forever, he had blessed, though they must pass slowly through the dreadful chasm of separation, might yet meet the sooner. These visions needed not that any sound should speak to me, or music mould my feelings. The hint from the litany, the fragment from the clouds, — these and the storied windows were sufficient."

But there is a suggestion in De Quincey's enumeration of his blessings of the over-shadowing presence of the "horrid pugilistic brother." And thankful, indeed, we are to this genius of mischief for those pranks that give a touch of real child-life to their boyhood days at Greenhay. Experiences with his brother The chapter in the *Autobiographic Sketches* which describes his escapades is significantly called *Introduction to the World of Strife*. The instigator of the strife, William by name, was, in short, a magnetic bully, whom the shrinking Thomas could neither keep pace with nor desert. He has described him, "fertile as Robinson Crusoe, as full of quarrel as it is possible to imagine; who, in default of any other opponent, would have fastened upon his own shadow for presuming to run before him when going westwards in the morning. . . . Books he detested one and all, except such as he happened to write himself." One of these was *How to raise a ghost, and when you've got him down how to keep him down*. William's greatest praise for his younger brother was, "You're honest; you're willing, though lazy; you would pull if you had the strength of a flea; and, though a monstrous coward, you don't run away." But in his brother's contempt, Thomas confesses one solace, the "guaranty of an unmolested repose." Strange philosophical deduction for a boy of six! nor was it wholly true; for as a matter of fact there was little repose for him in the three years and a half

when, under his brother's generalship, he fought daily battles with the Manchester factory boys; or listened with his sisters and friends in the nursery, night after night, to the lectures on physics and chemistry and the occult sciences as delivered by the versatile William. Hour by hour he would profoundly explain the simple art of flying, always demonstrating from a height downward, to be reproached by the literal sister who complained that he never flew back again! "How to translate right reverend gentlemen to the moon" was the subject of a favorite lecture. Reading of his supercilious talks to these younger children crouching before him "in an agony of respect," one comes with positive joy upon De Quincey's account of a mutiny among the audience. "William had happened to say what was no unusual thing with him, that he flattered himself that he had made the point under discussion tolerably clear, — 'clear,' he added, bowing round the half-circle of us, the audience, 'to the meanest of capacities.' Upon which, a voice, a female voice, — but whose voice in the tumult that followed I did not distinguish, — retorted, 'No, you have n't; it's dark as sin;' and then, without a moment's interval, a second voice exclaimed, 'Dark as night;' then came my young brother's insurrectionary yell, 'Dark as midnight;' then another female voice chimed in melodiously, 'Dark as pitch;' and so the peal continued to come round like a catch, the whole being so well concerted, and the rolling fire so well sustained that it was impossible to make head against it; whilst the abruptness of the interruption gave to it the protecting character of an oral 'round robin,' it being impossible to challenge any one in particular as ringleader." This intellectual bullying did De Quincey little harm; exquisite suffering, however, he did endure from the war with the factory boys. These young roughs started the feud by jeering at the aristocratic trousers and Hessian boots of the De Quincey boys. The challenge in their first derisive cry of "Boots, boots!" was accepted by William, who proudly halted on the bridge which connected Greenhay with Manchester, and bade the offender draw near that he might "give his flesh to the fowls of the air." The war began. Thomas, as younger brother, was convinced that he owed military allegiance to William. They fought usually twice a day, and the two aristocrats commonly ended the battle by running away. Every night, however, William insisted on their singing a *Te Deum*, for

their supposed victory, — a proceeding at which his brother's more sensitive conscience was troubled. With real physical and mental agony the days came round, the young lieutenant always being possessed by a deadly depression whenever he approached what had become to him veritably a "Bridge of Sighs," and often innocently falling into treason against his brother and being threatened with hanging at the next tree; from which threat, however, with a literalness that must have taxed the patience of the high-spirited general, he used in his bolder moments to defend himself with the objection that there were "no trees in Oxford Street." Furthermore, a second calamity was to fall upon Thomas from the fertile brain of his brother, whose "Napoleonic ambition" compelled his younger brother to govern an imaginary kingdom, Gombroon, simply that King William might invade it and conquer it at will. The lowest grade of civilization was allotted to the Gombroonians, and their young king was held accountable for all their degradations. Now he lived "forever under the terror of two separate wars in two separate worlds; one against the factory boys in a real world of flesh and blood, of stones and brickbats, of flight and pursuit; the other in a world purely aerial, where all the combats and the sufferings were absolute moonshine." An armistice, however, was finally effected with the factory people; and before trouble could again arise, William, who had shown some skill in drawing, was sent away to study with a London landscape painter of note. There he died before he was sixteen, so the two brothers never met again.

Strongest among the half-concealed tastes of De Quincey's childhood were a love of books and a love of music. **Love of books** Unfortunately the home library could but poorly satisfy the boy. Cowper and Johnson were recommended by his father, but were not so much appreciated as Mrs. Barbauld and *The Arabian Nights*. He and his sister were original critics to the extent of deciding, contrary to all more authoritative opinion, that *Sinbad* and *Aladdin* were not the best of the tales, but the worst, taking this somewhat high ground for two young literati whose "combined ages made no more than a baker's dozen," — that the former "lacked unity of form, and the latter, movement in the narrative." And yet nothing charmed the lad so much as the mysticism of *Aladdin*. That the magician of the lamp, applying his ear to the earth, should

know among millions of footsteps the peculiar tread of the boy Aladdin, playing in the streets of Bagdad six thousand miles away, was filled for him with "something of dark sublimity." His first impression of the morally sublime in literature he attributes to these two lines from Phædrus: —

"Æsopo statuum ingentem posuere Attici;  
Servumque collocarunt eterna in basi." <sup>1</sup>

For the appeal of their sound he used to linger over the words, "Belshazzar, the king, made a great feast to a thousand of his lords" (Daniel v. 1), and the opening lines of *Macbeth*: —

"When," — "but watch," he says, "what an emphasis of thunder dwells upon that word 'when,' " —

"When shall we three meet again,  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?"

The only other bit of reading to which De Quincey makes reference at this time is a story in a volume written by the good Dr. Percival, their family physician at Greenhay, a sentimental tale of a young private who avenged an insult given by a commanding officer by saving that superior's honor on the battlefield. As De Quincey says, it is "not much of a story, which will collapse into nothing at all, unless you yourself are able to dilate it by expansive sympathy with its sentiment." But it added one to his boyish search for the sublime.

Of his passion for music he writes, "I loved unspeakably the grand and varied system of chanting in the Romish and English churches. And, looking back at this day to the ineffable benefits which I derived from the church of my childhood, I account among the very greatest those which reached me through the various chants connected with the 'O Jubilate,' the 'Magnificat,' the 'Te Deum' and the 'Benedicite.' Through these chants it was that the sorrow which laid waste my infancy, and the devotion which nature had made a necessity of my being, were profoundly interfused."

Four years after the death of De Quincey's father, in 1796, the establishment at Greenhay was broken up and the family moved to Bath. Thomas, now in his twelfth year, and his younger brother, the boy of fragile beauty and winning sweetness to whom a most poetic chapter in the *Autobiography* is devoted, were sent to

**The Bath  
Grammar  
School,  
1796**

<sup>1</sup> "A colossal statue did the Athenians raise to Æsop;  
And a poor Pariah slave they planted upon an everlasting pedestal."

the Grammar School, of which an accomplished classical scholar, Mr. Morgan, was the head. De Quincey entered proficient in Latin, but below the standard in Greek. Under Dr. Morgan, however, his love of the Greek carried him on so rapidly that "at thirteen," he writes, "I wrote Greek with ease, and at fifteen my command of that language was so great that I could converse fluently, an accomplishment owing to the practice of daily reading off the newspapers into the best Greek I could furnish extempore." "That boy," said one of his masters, calling the attention of a stranger to him, "that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one." But a greater triumph from the first attended De Quincey's Latin verses. The head-master, disappointed in the scholarship of his oldest class, used to read and praise the translations of the little lad in the lower form. At first, De Quincey basked deliciously in the sunshine of such approbation and distinction; but soon he was to feel the sharp tooth of envy. One of the older boys strode up to him one day in the playground, dealt him an introductory blow upon the shoulder, asked him "what the devil he meant by bolting out of the course and annoying other people in that manner," and told him to see to it in the future that he "wrote worse." On the next sending up of verses to the master, De Quincey "double-shotted" his guns, and double applause descended upon him. Then again his tormentor appeared to him: "You little devil, so you call this writing your worst?" "No, I call it writing my best," was the sturdy answer. The struggle went on for a year, and "all the while," De Quincey says, "for a word spoken with kindness how readily I would have resigned the peacock's feather in my hat as the merest of baubles."

The cause of his removal from the school was a mere accident, described in a boyish letter to his sister. "This day, as we were up saying,<sup>1</sup> Mr. M. was called out, and so forsooth *little*, or rather *big Mounseer Collins* must jump into the desk. It happened that little Harman wanted his hat, which hung up above Collins's head. Wilbraham asked for the cane to reach it him, which Collins refused, and at the same time to give a little strength to his refusal and to enforce his authority as a master, he endeavored to hit him on the shoulder (as *he* says); but how shall I relate the sequel?

<sup>1</sup> Reciting.



On poor Ego did it fall. Say, Muse, what could inspire the cane with such a direful purpose? But not on my shoulder, but on my *pate* it fell,—unhappy pate, worthy of a better fate!” The boy was carried at once to his mother’s house at Bath, and the blow seemed serious for some time. While the aching head was healing, his mother read to him such soothing works as Milner’s *Church History*, Johnson’s *Rambler*, a translation of Ariosto and Tasso, and *Paradise Lost*! The choice was characteristic of the severe intellect of the mother; and the pleasure with which it was accepted, of the strange appreciation of the boy. Several tutors were engaged before he was put back to school again, and of a certain Frenchman the following story was recalled years after by De Quincey’s own daughter. It is worth quoting inasmuch as it shows the dreamy, bookish lad in a new and not unpleasing light. “My grandmother,” says Miss De Quincey, “was an attractive-looking and agreeable woman; and this Frenchman—a man of considerable rank and fortune—had a great business in looking after the unruly children, who were all the worse for finding out that he had wanted to marry their mother. Instead of doing their lessons, the two younger brothers and my father took seats at the window, and employed their time in making faces at an old lady who lived opposite. The poor French gentleman, utterly unable to teach or keep order, was constantly to be heard saying, ‘Now, Monsieur Tomma, oh, do be persuaded! Oh, do be persuaded.’ At length the old lady complained. My grandmother then represented the matter in its true light, and suddenly Monsieur Tomma was ‘persuaded’ to go over and apologize to their neighbor, who was somewhat surprised to receive a call from the little wretch who had annoyed her, but who had made such a handsome apology that she asked him to sit down, and he at once entered into conversation with her. She afterwards spoke of him to many people, saying that he was the cleverest and nicest little boy she ever saw. The tutor went back to France, but not as Monsieur Tomma’s stepfather.”

Possibly to put an end to such pranks as these, De Quincey was next sent to a school at Winkfield whose rigid Evangelicalism recommended it to his mother. Nothing so well describes the place the boy made for himself there as these lines written by one of his schoolfellows, Thomas Greenfield.

The  
Winkfield  
school,  
1798

"What deep, sad yearnings in my bosom swelled  
 As — thrice ten years elapsed, — I once beheld,  
*Winkfield*, thy homely scene, so early known,  
 The schoolroom, playground, silent now and lone !  
 Thyself how changed ! a pensive pilgrim gray,  
 Where oft the schoolboy rushed from task to play !  
 'Twas there, *De Quincey* (not obscure the name,  
 Linked with bright *Coleridge*, and with *opium's* fame),  
*You* kindly solved each question I might ask  
 In *Virgil's*, *Ovid's* loved though painful task.  
 So fine your genius, and so bland your mood,  
 Amidst a horde of savages so rude,  
 A being of superior mould you seemed,  
 And, like an angel, mixed with mortals, beamed.  
 Tutored by *your* Homeric mind's command,  
 We marched a *Grecian* and a *Trojan* band ;  
*Achilles*, *Ajax*, *Diomedes*, arrayed  
 With spear and shield by Farmer Hillman made.  
 Ulysses marked yourself, the master mind ;  
 While in your beauteous brother *Paris* shined.  
 Old *Spencer's* self approved the classic wile,  
 And wreathed his solemn visage to a smile.  
 When Ames's school had challenged *Spencer's* boys,  
 Still rings in memory's ear the applauding noise  
 That hailed your bold response, rehearsed aloud  
 From the school-table to the stripling crowd,  
 Hurling 'retorted scorn' in martial numbers proud.  
 The prize proposed to schools, and well bestowed  
 On *your* neat version of Horatian ode,  
 For little *Winkfield* won unlooked-for fame,  
 And blazoned at fourteen De Quincey's name."

The "bold response" referred to was De Quincey's answer in verse to a challenge from a neighboring school : —

"Since Ames's skinny school has dared  
 To challenge *Spencer's* boys,  
 We thus to them bold answer give  
 To prove ourselves 'no toys.'  
 Full thirty hardy boys we are,  
 As brave as e'er was known ;  
 We will nor threats nor dangers mind  
 To make you change your tone."

So, as well as a dreamer, the lad was a genuine boy at times, full of fun and good spirits.

At the end of a year De Quincey left Winkfield to accept the invitation of a young friend, Lord Westport, son of the Irish Earl of Altamont, and grandson of the celebrated Lord Howe, to join him in a long holiday at his father's estate in West Ireland. The chapter in the *Autobiographical Notes* devoted to this visit is wonderful reading.

A holiday  
 in London,  
 1800

"Already at three stages' distance (say forty miles from London) upon some of the greatest roads, the dim presentiment of some vast capital reaches you obscurely and like a misgiving. . . . Arriving at the last station for changing horses, . . . you no longer think (as in other places) of naming the next stage; nobody says, on pulling up, 'Horses on to London,' — that would sound ludicrous; one mighty idea broods over all minds, making it impossible to suppose any other destination." With three hours to see the city, the boys tossed up pennies to decide whether they would spend that time in Westminster or St. Paul's. Heads for Westminster coming up, neither was satisfied; so, boy-like, they flipped for better luck, and fate gave them the cathedral.

De Quincey's record of their days at Eton shows in strange alternation the boy and the philosopher. He yawns with a child's weariness at a royal party, while the music and dancing seem to him "the very grandest form of passionate sadness;" he has the young hero-worshipper's delight at seeing all the great men and women who had been only names to him, but reflects upon the perfunctory and artificial hauteur which these people are bound to assume to one another; then he and Lord Westport, in the face of this ceremonious merry-making, amuse themselves by talking "Ziph," querying, "Shagall wege gogo agawagay igin agan hourgour?"<sup>1</sup> And once outside they throw up their hats and huzzah for pleasure in their recovered liberty.

From Eton, by Holyhead, they journeyed to Ireland. Those were the interesting days when the bill for the union with England had just passed the Irish Parliament. Under the conduct of Lord Altamont, De Quincey could enjoy all the spectacles of that crisis; and his letters written home show a grasp of the significance of what he saw. At Lord Westport's country home in Connaught, the wild scenery, the "Tartan-like stables," with their trick ponies and tricky grooms, the "old libraries, old butlers, and old customs, that seemed all alike to belong to the era of Cromwell," gave him all he could think of.

Returning from their Irish tour, the two friends parted at Birmingham, young Westport going on to Oxford and De Quincey starting for Laxton in Northamptonshire. Here he was to visit

<sup>1</sup> Ziph was a secret language made by preceding every vowel in a word by a *g* with the vowel before it: i. e., an = agan and in = igin.

Holidays  
in Ireland,  
1800



Lady Carbery, an old friend of his mother's, who used to look upon him when an invalid child as "a sort of a superior toy, a toy that could breathe and talk." The setting at Lady Carbery's seemed an ideal one for developing the boy's intellectual powers. The old library, stretching through seven rooms, with its careful classifications of books covering almost the entire literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was a joy to him. "Here," he said, "I can *pursue* a subject, once I have started it." Lady Carbery, as intellectual as she was beautiful, had begun a systematic study of theology, but, finding herself handicapped by her ignorance of Greek, she installed her youthful visitor as tutor. Greek Testaments and lexicons were ordered, and soon the two, a pretty picture side by side, were hard at work. Passing through the park gate at Laxton at his departure, De Quincey made this grateful tribute to his hostess: "I had seen and become familiarly acquainted with a young man who had in a manner died to every object round him, had died an intellectual death, and suddenly been called back to life and real happiness, — had been in effect raised from the dead by the accident of meeting a congenial female companion." And, with prophetic foresight, he added, "Was it not likely enough that I was rushing forward to court and woo some frantic mode of evading an endurance that by patience might have been borne?"

Visit to  
Laxton,  
1800

The "endurance" to be borne was three years of schooling in Manchester. This school was proposed by his guardians because it was possible for a student of good standing there to win an annuity of some £50 for the seven years at Oxford. "When first I entered," De Quincey writes, "I remember that we read Sophocles; and it was a constant matter of triumph to us, the learned triumvirate of the first form, to see our 'Archididasculos' (as he loved to be called) conning our regular lesson before we went up, and laying a regular train, with lexicon and grammar, for blowing up and blasting (as it were) any difficulties he found in the choruses; whilst we never condescended to open our books until the moment of going up, and were generally employed in writing epigrams on his wig." The contempt he felt for this pedant and his uncongenial schoolfellows, sons of artisans and even of servants, and his hatred of the town of Manchester itself, "all mud below and smoke above," made his life here miserable. There were bright spots, however; Lady Carbery

The Man-  
chester  
school,  
1800-1802

came to town for a number of months in the winter and taught him her newly acquired Hebrew in conscientious exchange for the old Greek lessons; a gentle old Swedenborgian divine loved the boy and gave him freely of his books and himself; and De Quincey was also introduced to the Liverpool Literary Coterie, of whom Dr. Currie, the biographer of Burns, was then a member. The boy's vanity may well have been flattered to find himself admitted to this circle, especially when some of them arranged to meet him daily at sunrise that he might guide them through *Æschylus*. But the school he could not endure. A letter to his mother, asking that he might be sent up to Oxford, for which he was already prepared, ended with this argument: "I ask whether a person can be happy, or even simply easy, who is in a situation which deprives him of *health*, of *society*, of *amusement*, of *liberty*, of *congeniality of pursuits*?" But his reasoning failed to produce any impression. So he resolved to take matters into his own hands and run away on his seventeenth birthday. Lady Carbery, not dreaming the purpose for which he wanted it, lent him £10, and one morning he was early upon the road to Chester, with a small bundle of clothes under his arm and his Euripides in his pocket.

His longing was to go to the English Lakes and see Wordsworth; but a sense of duty sent him first to his mother's home in Chester. Her decorous judgment, he says, looked upon his sudden appearance there "much as she would have done at the opening of the seventh seal in *Revelation*." But an uncle visiting them at the time suggested that she give the boy a guinea a week to travel and enjoy himself. Accordingly, from June to November of this year, 1802, he wanders about North Wales, sometimes bivouacing on the hills at night to make his three shillings a day go farther than it could at the inns, and once lodging for three weeks in a solitary farmhouse, subsisting on berries. Like Coleridge in the army, he sometimes earned a little money by writing a business letter for an illiterate farmer, or, what was more to his liking, a love-letter for the daughter who wondered at the ease with which he seemed to divine and express her thoughts. Finally, however, finding himself almost penniless, for he had not chosen to let those at home always know where to send his allowance, he resolved to go to London, and there

**Wanderings  
in Wales,  
1802**

borrow capital from the Jewish money-lenders on his "expectations."

So, late in November, 1802, De Quincey opens negotiations with one Dell, in Greek Street, London. That house and all connected with it are familiar to readers of *The Confessions*, for the sufferings De Quincey endured in those days were the immediate cause of his recourse

**Vagrancy  
in London,  
1802**

to opium. Dell's policy was to keep his petitioners waiting; De Quincey's money dwindled fast. Finally, he was glad to give up his own lodgings and accept the shelter of one of the rooms in Dell's business house, sharing it with a wretched, starved child, who welcomed him with joy as a protector against the rats who had been her nightly terror. During business hours when he felt himself in the way, he loitered in the parks or walked the streets. Here he met poor "Ann" of Oxford Street, for whom he has made a name in literature. She it was who, finding him unconscious upon a doorstep, spent her last sixpence to save him from death. In this extremity De Quincey made one attempt to get help from his former friends; he went to Eton to ask Lord Westport to go security for him in the loan he was trying to negotiate. But his friend was in Oxford, so the visit availed nothing. On his return to London, Ann had disappeared and no efforts could find her. "This," he says, "amongst such troubles as most men meet with in this life, has been my heaviest affliction." Soon, it seems, De Quincey was discovered by some friend, and persuaded to go back to his mother at Chester. The marks of his London experience, however, had been imprinted upon his face. Carlyle, long afterward, saw the traces and said, "Eccevi! look at him! this child has been in Hell!" In the autumn of 1803, De Quincey accepted the meagre offer made by his guardians of £100 a year, and started for Oxford.

There are few incidents of his university life to tell. More and more De Quincey lived within himself, holding little intercourse with students or tutors. Largely because it

**Oxford,  
1803-1808**

still kept the full cathedral service, he first chose to become a member of Christ College; but, barred from that because he had not put his name on the waiting list, he entered Worcester, — evidently because it demanded so little "caution money."<sup>1</sup> He took good rooms for himself, but never gave nor

<sup>1</sup> Money deposited by the students as a guaranty that their bills would be paid.

accepted an invitation during his first years. If he met a tutor in the quadrangle, three sentences might pass between them, two to the credit of the tutor. He says, "While there, I compute that I did not utter one hundred words for two years." It was then that he started upon a systematic study of English Literature, fastening his strongest enthusiasm upon the contemporary poets. "That appreciation of Wordsworth," he says, "which it has taken full thirty years to establish amongst the public, I had already made." In 1803 he went to Westmoreland, but shyness drove him back before he had actually seen Wordsworth. The latter, however, answered his letters in a tone that indicated that he would be glad to know his young admirer. Another fact of De Quincey's college days is of importance. It was then that he began the use of opium, as a palliative for the neuralgia contracted in his vagrant days in Wales and London. "Happiness," he says, "I now found could be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket." At this time, however, he used the drug only moderately. At the end of his course, Dr. Greenough, one of the examiners, said to a member of Worcester, "You have sent us the cleverest man I have ever met with; if his *viva voce* examination to-morrow corresponds with what he has done to-day, he will carry everything before him." But for some strange whim, — an offence taken against the examiners, or a distrust of his own presence of mind in oral answering, — he suddenly disappeared from Oxford without his degree.

The years from 1807 to 1812 were to bring De Quincey, in a measure, out of his solitude and into contact with men whose names had long been as magnets to him. He goes to London

**Meetings with contemporary writers, 1808-1812** with some evident intention of studying for the bar, and there meets Charles Lamb. Then he makes hurried visits to his mother's country home in Somersetshire, and is a guest at Hannah More's, where he hears from Mrs. Siddons her fascinating recollections of Dr. Johnson and David Garrick. Hearing in the summer of 1807 that Coleridge also is in Somersetshire, he goes deliberately in search of the great man. He finds him standing in a gateway, lost in abstraction, and knows him at once by his soft, dreamy eyes. Aroused from his reverie, however, Coleridge is all graciousness. A few weeks later De Quincey finds that he can do a service for this new-found friend by conducting Mrs. Cole-

ridge and her children to Keswick, where they expect to live with Southey. They plan to visit Wordsworth at Grasmere on the way, so De Quincey is knight-eager to undertake the journey which will bring the other members of the Lake School within his reach. His own words best describe his entrance into Wordsworth's cottage: "Through the little gate I passed forward; ten steps beyond it lay the principal door of the house. To this, no longer clearly conscious of my own feelings, I pressed on rapidly. I heard a step, a voice, and, like a flash of lightning, I saw the figure emerge of a tallish man, who held out his hand, and saluted me with most cordial expressions of welcome." Then followed the lady of "Egyptian brown," Dorothy Wordsworth, afterwards the life-long friend of the De Quinceys. A few days later he reached Southey's door, and could count the whole of the Lake School among his acquaintances. Many incidents, personal and interesting, could be told of his friendships with these men: how he, starving not so long ago in London, now insisted on sending an anonymous gift of £300 to Coleridge, temporarily in difficulties; how he attended those wonderful evening gatherings in Coleridge's London chambers when Lamb, Hazlitt, and Godwin, too, made their way up the rickety stairs; how he spent weeks in putting a pamphlet of Wordsworth's through the press; and how, at the solicitation of the Wordsworths, he decided to take up his abode in their old cottage in Grasmere. One is amused at Miss Wordsworth's zeal in selecting his carpets and curtains, and by her argument for extravagantly buying mahogany furniture instead of deal, because "no wood sells so well at second-hand as mahogany."

In 1809 the Wordsworths moved to their new home at Allan Bank, and De Quincey, taking possession of "the cottage immortal," linked his name with the Lake School.

Here, in communion with nature, in the delights of romping with the Wordsworth children, who adored him as "Kinsey," in the quiet evenings with his books, and in keen intellectual intercourse with his friends, he found what he called "poetic refinement in his surroundings." There were some annoyances, of course,—as when Wordsworth cut the pages in a precious volume of Burke with a knife hastily picked up from the tea-table and covered with butter; or when Coleridge, having borrowed and transported to his house some five hundred of De Quincey's books, carefully wrote in them all

**Life at  
Grasmere,  
1809-1816**



Thomas de Quincey, *Esquire*, causing the owner some hours of labor in erasing the suffix later. Sorrow came, as well, in the death of little Catherine Wordsworth, whom De Quincey mourned with a grief as abandoned and touching as it was unusual. A strong breath of life blew in upon him in the person of John Wilson, later to be known as Christopher North, whom Wordsworth brought to De Quincey's cottage. The two became close companions, and a strange pair they must have looked, tramping the hills together: De Quincey, quick, agile, nervous, slipping and sliding along; Wilson, tall, robust, striding over the ground like a giant. It is a tonic to read of the walks they took.

Perhaps the most memorable winter of De Quincey's life, in some respects, was that of 1814-1815, which he spent with Wilson in Edinburgh. Of Scott and Jeffrey he seemed to have seen little; but there was a younger and a brilliant set there to welcome him, — Sir William Hamilton, William Allan, the painter, Robert Gillies with his choice bits of literary gossip, Lockhart, and others who were all but dazzled by the boyish genius who had come among them to speak the last word in every discussion, and to cap every quotation or allusion with one still better. Mr. Gillies's memory of him is illuminating: "His voice was extraordinary: it came as if from dreamland; but it was the most musical and impressive of voices. In convivial life, what then seemed to me the most remarkable trait of De Quincey's character was the power he possessed of easily changing the tone of ordinary thought and conversation into that of his own dreamland, till his auditors, in wonder, found themselves moving pleasantly along with him in a sphere of which they might have heard and read, perhaps, but which had ever appeared to them inaccessible and far, far away!"

In 1816, in Grasmere, De Quincey married Margaret Simpson, the daughter of a Westmoreland farmer. For a year he had practically conquered his habit of taking opium in large quantities, and, with the daily amount reduced from three hundred and forty to forty grains, he felt justified in undertaking the support and protection of a bride of eighteen. All of his tributes to her in writing are most devoted and tender; but the following from the pen of their daughter gives, perhaps, the best impression of her personality. "Delicate health and

**A winter  
in Edin-  
burgh,  
1814-1815**

**Marriage,  
1816**

family cares made her early withdraw from society, but she seems to have had a powerful fascination for the few friends she admitted to intimacy, from an old charwoman who used to threaten us, as though it were guilt on our part, 'Ye'll ne'er be the gallant woman ye're mither was,' to a friend who had seen society in all the principal cities of Europe, and who, with no reason for exaggeration, told us he had never seen a more gracious or a more beautiful lady than our mother." By the middle of the year 1817, however, De Quincey is again under the power of the drug; his will utterly deserts him; letters lie unanswered on his table for months; two great literary projects are put aside unfinished; and his days and nights are tormented by the horrors of the opium dreams. Little need to describe here what he has made so graphic in the pages of the *Confessions* and *Suspiria de Profundis*.

At the end of this year of inactivity it became urgent that he should arouse his energies enough, at least, to supply the immediate needs of his family. The first opportunity that presented itself was the editorship of the *Westmoreland Gazette*. Hardly a safe man to trust with work that demanded steady, prompt business methods, but, stationing an assistant in Kendal to do the scrub work, and borrowing £500 on the prospects of his new position, he feels "reëstablished for life." The columns of the Gazette during his régime must have contained some of the best of English wit, imagination, speculation, and philosophy; but this was hardly the demand of the country people who were its subscribers. So it is no surprise to find the editorship soon relinquished. Fortunately, however, De Quincey has conceived "a liking for copy and printer's proof" strong enough to carry him to London, where he appears in 1821 as a magazine writer.

The power among the periodicals in those days was the *London Magazine*. Keats had written for its early numbers; "Elia" was still contributing his charming essays; Thomas Hood was an assistant editor; and, looking over its old volumes, one may alight upon the familiar title of many a piece which is now a classic. In September, 1821, appeared some twenty pages, entitled *Confessions of an Opium-Eater: being an Extract from the Life of a Scholar*. In October the second number was printed, and in December was announced the promise of a third part.

**Editorship  
of West-  
moreland  
Gazette,  
1817**

**Confessions  
of an  
Opium-  
Eater, 1821**

Impatient subscribers waited a year for the promise to fulfil itself, solacing themselves comfortably in the meanwhile with *Lamb's Dissertation on Roast Pig*. Finally the magazine brought out the *Confessions* in a separate volume, from which the author's name was still withheld. Interest, wonder, and praise were provoked on every side, as well as curious speculations as to the truthfulness of the experiences related. In short, all that was written in enthusiasm about the *Confessions* would make a far larger volume than the work itself.

From 1822 until 1825, De Quincey's name appeared as a regular monthly contributor to the *London Magazine* and a frequent writer for *Knight's Quarterly*, upon the staff of which were Macaulay and Praed. In everything he had written in these four years, it was clearly evident that a new voice was speaking in English literature. This truth was generously acknowledged by Wilson's introduction of the conversation of the Opium-Eater into his *Noctes Ambrosianae*. Says the shepherd: "Hech, sirs, yon bit opium tract's a desperate interesting confession. It's perfectly dreadfu', yon pouring in upon you o' oriental eemagery. Six thousand drops o' lowdnam! It's as muckle, I fancy, as a bottle of whisky. I tried the experiment mysel', after reading the wee, wud, wicked wark, wi' five hunner drops, and I couped ower and continued in ae snore frae Monday night till Friday morning. But I had naething tae confess; at least naething that wud gang into words." North accounts for the "damnation of the *London Magazine* by the fact that all other contributors looked such ninnies beside De Quincey, that the public burst out a-laughing in the poor magazine's face. Then one and all of them began mimicking our friend, and pretended to be opium-eaters. Now, the effect of the poppy upon the puppy is most offensive to the bystanders."

These years of literary success, however, were dearly bought. They saw all the sufferings of De Quincey's second breaking away from the laudanum, and a third yielding to its power.

He was obliged to be separated from his family, they in Grasmere, and he in London, so homesick that he gave up his daily walk in Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens "from the misery of seeing children in multitudes," he said, "that too forcibly recalled my own." Pecuniary embarrassments, also, were so great that he seems to be almost hiding

Contribu-  
tions to  
periodicals,  
1822-1825

Difficulties  
of the years  
1825-1830



from his creditors; he sends to Professor Wilson two addresses which would reach him, adding the warning, "The latter may be the better, because I would rather not be tracked too precisely at present." Thereupon Wilson kindly remarks that De Quincey would be more harrassed by a debt of £5 than many another man by one of £100. His warmest friends in those days were Charles and Mary Lamb, who sought out the "fantastical duke of dark corners" and brought him to the seclusion of their own fireside. Young Hood, too, found it a pleasure to go to De Quincey's rooms to dun him for copy. "There I have found him," he says, "at home, quite at home, in the midst of a German Ocean of Literature in a storm,—flooding all the floor, the table and the chairs—billows of books, tossing, tumbling, surging open,—and on such occasions I have willingly listened by the hour, whilst the Philosopher, standing, with his eyes fixed on the side of the room, seemed to be less speaking than reading from a handwriting on the wall." Hazlitt walked with him by the hour through the streets of London in lively discussion. All counted it good fortune to meet him. And yet De Quincey never played the literary lion, but was to the end the incurable recluse. Wilson's efforts on his behalf resulted in *Blackwood's* publishing a series of his articles,—among them, *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*. These, with occasional contributions to the *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*, relieved his embarrassments for a while. It was about this time that Carlyle first met De Quincey. An invitation to visit him and Mrs. Carlyle in Craigenputtock soon followed. "Your presence at this fireside," Carlyle writes, "will diffuse no ordinary gladness over all members of the household. . . . Would *you* come hither to be king over us, then indeed we had made a fair beginning, and the *Bog School* might snap its fingers at the *Lake School*." In 1830, De Quincey having taken up new engagements in Edinburgh, it was decided, upon the energetic advice of Miss Wordsworth, to save the expenses of two establishments, and, much as he and his family regretted leaving Grasmere, to remove to Edinburgh.

There, for ten years from 1830 until 1840, among all those brilliant writers, publishers, lawyers, and divines that made Edinburgh a "modern Athens," the shy English stranger was the one best worth seeing and the one least seen. The literary record of those years consists

Life in  
Edinburgh,  
1830-1840

of contributions to *Blackwood*, and to *Tait's Magazine*, which published *Sketches of Life and Manners from the Autobiography of an English Opium-Eater*. Again the reading world was astonished into pleasure, although it criticised severely those passages commenting so frankly upon Coleridge, recently dead, and upon Southey and Wordsworth, still living. Southey burst into flame when Carlyle mentioned De Quincey's name to him, and exclaimed that some one ought to go to Edinburgh and "thrash the little wretch." And yet praise of the *Sketches* far exceeded the praise which the world was then willing to accord the poets. During these years, also, De Quincey wrote for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* the essays on Goethe, Shakespeare, Schiller, and Pope; and produced his only attempt at a romance, *Klosterheim*, published by Blackwood in book form in 1832. These were the days of his strange migrations from house to house. One hired lodging being fairly choked by his chaotic accumulations of books and papers, he would, in order to leave them undisturbed for future reference, hire another room, and, when that became similarly crowded, move thence to a third. So careless was he about going back to collect his scattered manuscripts and notes, that one almost feels there may be lurking yet in some obscure little room in Edinburgh a second *Confessions* or a continuation of those *Autobiographic Notes* which end with such disappointing abruptness.

In 1835 his son William died; "my first-born child, the crown and glory of my life," was the burden of the father's mourning. These were dark days; two years before Deaths of wife and children had seen the death of a younger son, Julius, and two years later was to come the death of the wife whose patient affection, enduring no ordinary trials, had been his greatest support. De Quincey bears these sorrows, which age him pitifully, by fleeing to work. "I believe," he says, "that in the course of any one month since that unhappy day I have put forth more effort in the way of thought, of research, and of composition, than in any five months together selected from my previous life." The eldest of the remaining children — six in all — seems to have possessed the practical sense of her mother; for she persuades her father to take a house, Mavis Bush, near Lasswade, seven miles out of Edinburgh, where they could live within their means, and whither De Quincey could retire occasionally for refreshment from his labors in the city.

From this time De Quincey's nominal home is Lasswade, — the little cottage which was for so many years to be the Mecca of literary pilgrims. There are, of course, frequent flights to Glasgow and Edinburgh; and the lodgings "snowed up" with books and papers are still kept in the latter city. Little by little the dark days seem to brighten; and more content comes into his life than one could expect. Friends, and admirers who would be friends, are continually coming to pay their respects to his greatness; and now, through the receipt of certain legacies, the old worry over money has disappeared. He writes all night, refreshing himself with large quantities of tea or coffee. After a short sleep in the early hours of the day, he goes forth for a ramble through the pleasant country about his home. Or he may change the order, working by day and rambling by night. The only blot upon the years is a fourth fight against opium, ending in so signal a victory that for the rest of his life a few drops a day meet all his need. The work of this quiet decade, from 1840 to 1850, consists chiefly of contributions to *Blackwood's* and *Tait's*. The former published *Suspiria de Profundis* in 1845, and *The English Mail-Coach* in 1849. *Joan of Arc* was printed in *Tait's* in 1847.

**Life at  
Lasswade,  
1840-1849**

In consideration of the position De Quincey had won for his name and work at this time, the following incident can be accounted for only as one of those odd things which were always happening to the oddest of men. In 1849 a Mr. Hogg, the editor of an Edinburgh weekly known as *The Instructor*, was called out of his office by the word that a gentleman wished to see him. "Going down," he says, "I was confronted by a noticeably small figure, attired in a capacious garment which was much too large, and which served the purpose of both under and over coat. It was some time before the extreme refinement of the face was noticed, — not indeed until the voice, gentle, clear, and silvery, began to be heard." It was De Quincey, offering an article for *The Instructor*, with as much modesty as if he had never yet penned a line that had been printed. Small need to say that anything which could be signed *De Quincey* would be accepted on the moment; but the manuscript was not delivered until the writer had drawn a small handbrush from his pocket and carefully brushed it free from any dust that might have lodged upon it during his seven-mile walk in from Lasswade. Trivial

**Publication  
of complete  
works,  
1850-1859**

as this occurrence may seem, it led to an important event in De Quincey's life. Mr. Hogg conceived the plan of publishing, with the author's help, a complete edition of his works. Others who knew De Quincey's lack of punctuality and responsibility in business matters had trembled to enter upon such an undertaking. But Mr. Hogg's enthusiasm was not to be daunted and De Quincey was all interest; so in 1853 appeared the first volume of the series which was to bear the title — broad enough to cover all the writings of so versatile a genius — *Selections Grave and Gay, from the Writings, published and unpublished, of Thomas De Quincey*. Already Messrs. Ticknor and Fields of Boston, through the personal interest of Mr. Fields himself, had undertaken a similar task, thus somewhat justifying Hawthorne's remark: "No Englishman cares a pin for De Quincey; we are ten times as good readers and critics as they." This publishing house relied but little upon De Quincey's personal help, except in one or two specific instances. But it was characteristic of their generosity that Mr. Fields, leaving the cottage at Lasswade after a visit of several days, put into Miss De Quincey's hands a cheque for a large share of the profits accruing from the sale of the American edition, to be given to her father when the guest had vanished. The Edinburgh edition gained much from the author's personal supervision; but it was not always easy even for him to sort, classify, and arrange essays scattered through forty years of writing into what was in the end at best not more than an "orderly jumble." And De Quincey's difficulty in handling his material must often have been paralleled by Mr. Hogg's difficulty in managing his assistant. The letters that passed to the publisher's office from the house at 42 Lothian Street, Edinburgh, whither De Quincey had betaken himself to be near the press, are an amusing collection of excuses for procrastination, — all most courteous, most definite as to reasons, most sorrowful; but none the less exasperating when the printers were standing idle, waiting for their copy to appear. Now it is an "attack of nervous suffering;" now a tax bill is being disputed and taking up his time; now he writes to find out if certain papers are "*chez moi*" or "*chez la presse*," because if at the latter place he would be "saved stooping to look for them on the floor," from which he would hardly "recover for a fortnight:" again, he has just set fire to his hair; or he keeps

the boy waiting because, he writes, "I am at present greatly dependent upon tea; and, as soon as I have had that, I hope to be a new creature." But in spite of all obstacles the edition of the complete works went through successfully.

In 1857 De Quincey made a journey to Ireland to visit the daughter who had married and gone there to live. It was something of an event for him at seventy-two to undertake the travelling, but he writes of it with affectionate enthusiasm as a journey to "the shrine of her little holiness, Eva Margaret Craig," his first granddaughter. For her and the grandson, already three years old, even in his busiest hours he was always preparing a tiger book, or a wolf book, or an elephant book. To have made the trip, and to have seen and known these grandchildren, was a rich source of happy recollections to him the rest of his days.

**Journey to  
Ireland,  
1857**

The pleasantest glimpses of the last years of De Quincey's life are to be found in his letters to his daughters, which, as they married and left home, became more frequent and most intimate. It is a wonder any of them ever reached their destination, for he often writes them on a margin of paper which he mislays, or he forgets to post them. Or, more fortunately, he may some day "spring a mine of envelopes underneath the litter of papers" upon his table, and then there is a daily letter for a long while.<sup>1</sup> These are all characteristic, — personal enough to be affectionate and solicitous, but never an unreserved revelation of himself; full of flashes of humor, graceful, fanciful; often amusing mazes of transitions from private matters to dissertations upon Plato's doctrine of the immortality of the soul, or to a criticism of some recent magazine article.

**De Quin-  
cey's  
letters**

In 1859, when the last volume of the collected works was ready for the press, it became evident that De Quincey's life was drawing to a close. So patient and gentle was he during his last illness, so courteous and so fearful of giving trouble, that those days are remembered by his daughters, who had been summoned to his lodgings in Edinburgh where the illness had overtaken him, with a solemn pleasure. His books were always with him, and even to the last he demanded his morning paper. When he slept, dreams of children

**Death,  
1859**

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately no one of these letters is short enough to quote here, but they may be found in vol. ii of Page's *Memoirs of De Quincey*.

haunted him, and his own boyhood he seemed to live over again. He had hardly ever mentioned his father to his children, but one of his last lucid sentences was, "There is a thing I much regret; that is, that I did not know more of my dear father, for I am sure that a juster, kinder man never lived." In the unconsciousness of his last moments his watchers heard him say, "My dear, dear mother, then I was greatly mistaken;" and later, with outstretched arms, he spoke his last words, "Sister, sister!" as if again he saw the vision of the little Elizabeth dead at Greenhay seventy years ago.

In the appendix to the early editions of the *Confessions*, De Quincey had written, "Like other men, I have peculiar fancies about the place of my burial; having lived chiefly in a mountainous region, I rather cling to the conceit that a grave in a green churchyard, amongst the ancient and solitary hills, will be a sublimer and more tranquil place of repose for a philosopher than any in the hideous Golgothas of London." One would like to think of him as resting beneath the shadows of the Westmoreland hills that he loved; but instead the traveller finds in the West Churchyard of Edinburgh, close under the castle rock, and almost within sight of the statue of Professor Wilson on Prince Street, a stone inscribed: "Sacred to the memory of Thomas De Quincey, who was born at Greenhay,<sup>1</sup> near Manchester, August 11, 1785, and died in Edinburgh, December 8, 1859, and of Margaret, his wife, who died August 7, 1837." There he was to rest, as secluded and retired in death as he had been in life.

## THE ESSAY AS A LITERARY FORM

IF we accept the division of all prose into the four distinct forms of narration, description, argumentation, and exposition, we must classify the essay under the last head. The term exposition, however, in its broadest sense includes all prose which has for its object the informing of the intellect rather than the arousing of the imagination or the logical faculty. This definition allows it to include many kinds

<sup>1</sup> Masson considers this a blunder common to all of De Quincey's biographies: he himself contends that Manchester was his birthplace.



of writing, — philosophical, religious, historical, scientific, technical, — that can lay no claim to being literature; and many exhaustive works, such as Darwin's *Origin of Species*, or Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, which are expositions by necessity and literature by chance. These form by themselves one division of exposition usually known as the treatise. But when we speak of the essay we mean a kind of exposition, purely literary, which has certain distinctive characteristics of its own. In comparison with the treatise it is short, and its aim is not so much to give information as to present a point of view in regard to information already in common possession. The writer of the essay reflects upon certain knowledge which he possesses; he selects the aspect that especially appeals to him; and he then presents his ideas in a deliberative mood, making a definite attempt to please as much, or more, by his form and expression as by the subject he has chosen. The term essay connotes some of this meaning: it means an attempt, a trial, a promise, a suggestion, and not an exhaustive treatment. Morley defines its sphere as "merely to open questions, to indicate points, to suggest cases, to sketch outlines." This, moreover, must be done in the way of a direct personal appeal from author to reader, — a principle which Bacon recognized when he wrote of his essays, "They come home to men's business and bosoms;" and also in an easy conversational tone, which was the secret of Addison's being able to boast, "I have brought philosophy out of closets to dwell in clubs and coffee houses."

If we review the development of the English essay as a distinct literary type, we find that it was many centuries in working its way out into this brief, personal form. Beginning with the heavy didactic style of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Browne, Dryden, and others, it developed along the lines of lighter treatment and more æsthetic form until, in the essays of Addison and Steele, it approached a type that somewhat tallied, in length, form, expression, and purpose, with what we expect in an essay to-day. Coming down to the next century, that of De Quincey, we find the basis laid by the *Spectator* papers crowned by a superstructure both substantial and beautiful. This century, which we may roughly designate as that from 1750–1850, was a period of wonderful expansion in prose, especially in the lines of the biographical, historical, philosophical, and critical essay. The new possibility of pub-

**Develop-  
ment of  
the essay**

lishing in such magazines as the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *London*, and *Blackwood's Magazine*, added to the modern spirit of investigation into all departments of life, made this era of the periodical review one of marvellous fertility. Here we find the largest group of general essayists that England has ever known, — Burke, Macaulay, Lamb, Carlyle, Coleridge, Jeffrey, Hazlitt, Sydney Smith, Landor, Leigh Hunt, Wilson, De Quincey. These men knew the laws of literary art, and recognized the fact that the artistic must be paramount with the intellectual in any writing which is to be ranked as literature. In general, the whole development of the English essay during these years was toward magnifying its æsthetic qualities and its artistic workmanship. In De Quincey — as *the* English essayist *par excellence* by almost general confession — we shall find these requirements satisfied.

The essay presents varied types. It may adopt every possible tone, — the impassioned and emotional, the analytical, the imaginative, the reflective, the logical; it may call in the aid of every other kind of prose, — narrative, descriptive, **Types of the essay** or argumentative; it may lay its hand upon every possible subject, from the simple themes chosen by Lamb to the complex criticisms of Carlyle. It is only by approximating the relative proportions of all these elements that we may approach even the broadest classification of types. The following is one generally agreed upon.

1. Philosophical or didactic essays.
2. Critical essays.
3. Historical and biographical essays.
4. Descriptive and poetic essays.

The didactic essay in its purest form carries us back to Bacon's "crowded treasuries of truths." Literary elegance to him meant force and sententiousness, and the elements of fancy and imagination were seldom admitted. The year of the establishment of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802) marks the beginning of the critical essay as a definite literary form. The papers contributed to that periodical by two of its founders — Jeffrey and Sydney Smith — were the earliest exponents of the type. Its purpose was literary criticism, often bitter and destructive, sometimes appreciative, but always useful in deciding standards and formu-



lating canons of literary art. To-day the critical essay seems to hold precedence among all other forms of prose; it explores every field of life, and it runs the whole gamut between the serious and the flippant. The essays of Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater, combining the highest æsthetic with the highest critical faculty, show the fine perfection which may be attained by this form of literature. Macaulay is the preëminent writer of essays of the third class, — historical or biographical reviews of chosen subjects, designed to present facts as well as opinions. To read his *Essay on Milton* is to learn the whole history of the Stuart period; and to know his *Johnson* is to know all about the Queen Anne's men — and women, — truth and gossip. This love of telling all he knew led Macaulay to extend the ordinary limits of the essay, and to portray facts for their own sake. Briefly, his essays may be called "short cuts" to knowledge. Of the fourth type are Lamb's essays, free from whatever is didactic or logical or instructive, and dominated by the wayward personal touch which a poet claims as his right. The impassioned style of prose is sometimes credited with creating a separate and distinct form of the essay; but it is, perhaps, more exact to designate it as a tone that may now and then creep into all of the other types. It comes nearest to being an exclusive form in the essays of Burke, — those persuasive, emotional, glowing "words that burn." But we find touches of it everywhere, — now in an essay of Macaulay's, now in a sketch of Lamb's, often in Carlyle's reviews, and something as near it as formality, would permit even in Bacon's guarded prose.

Has De Quincey, then, no place in this classification? When we come to a De Quincey or a Ruskin or a Carlyle we find the futility of rigid classification, and almost reach the conclusion that it is the smaller men who create types, while the greater over-ride all lines of classification. They cannot be "pigeon-holed" so readily; and this in itself is a tribute to their greatness. Our interest in De Quincey is enhanced, and our sense of his genius is enlarged, when we realize that his versatility evades classification. Like Bacon, he seems to have taken all knowledge for his province; and that knowledge assumed at each turn a new garb, until its entire literary wardrobe became a very kaleidoscope of color and form. De Quincey's own classification of his essays into

**Character-  
istics of  
De Quin-  
cey's  
essays**

1. Descriptive, Biographical, and Historical,
2. Speculative, Didactic, and Critical,
3. Imaginative and Prose Poetry,

almost exactly covers our general classification. We might, then, echo Dr. Johnson's epitaph upon Goldsmith: "He left scarcely any style of writing untouched." Bacon would have classified the above as essays of memory, essays of reason, essays of imagination. Either nomenclature gives us a right to expect every typical form of the essay among De Quincey's writings. Nor are we disappointed. The diversity of his prose is partly what has made him great. But more than that, "he touched nothing that he did not adorn." To the writing of such essays as are listed in the first group he brought all the resources of a knowledge and memory beyond that of most men; to the second group he gave an impressive treatment that lent force and power to his most original speculations; to the third group he gave the impassioned tone that marks great poetry and is seldom found in prose. Moreover, all these qualities reach, not always, but at their height, a mark not often attained by any other writer.

There are two elements which enter into the structure of all essays. These are the fundamental topics, and the related topics.

**The structure of essays**

The former are those considerations which the essayist counts of chief importance, and which he places, if his structure be good, in the conspicuous positions in his essay. The latter are matters of less importance in relation to the theme, but of vital importance in that they support and connect the main parts. To take a concrete example, we find that the fundamental topics of Macaulay's *Essay on Milton* are Milton's poetry, Milton's politics, Milton's character; some of the related topics which support these are the relation of poetry to civilization, the comparison of Milton and Dante, the justification of the English Rebellion, the contrast between the Puritans and the Cavaliers. These latter points must be woven into the discussion so as not to break up its unity and yet so as to seem necessary and vital. Properly managed, they throw into relief the main ideas, develop interesting lines of thought suggested by them, and round out the skeleton which the main topics constitute. Improperly managed, they stray into by-paths interesting to the author, but remote from his theme; worse than that, by attracting undue attention, they may destroy

the proportion of the whole. To say that the related topics should keep a subordinate position is not saying, by any means, that they need be inferior in style or interest. For, in the essay of Macaulay's already cited, one of the most memorable passages is the scathing condemnation of Charles II. Writers vary in introducing and connecting related topics from Burke's logical, economical compactness and conscientious proportion, to Carlyle's loose adjustment of part to part, and impetuous emphasis which made his topics "pegs on which to hang thoughts," rather than connected parts of one whole. But no English essayist, not even Carlyle, has digressed half so frequently or half so far afield as did De Quincey. Digression in itself is not always unjustifiable: it may soften and relieve the main thought, vary the movement of preceding passages, alleviate the stress laid upon some aspect of the subject, or throw light upon surrounding matter. It is wholly unjustifiable, however, when it is not recognized by the writer as digression. This De Quincey never fails to do. Unlike Carlyle, he acknowledges his habit. He announces often beforehand that he is going to wander; or he confesses afterward that he has been a-roving and wishes to return to the starting-point of his "rigamarole," as Mr. Saintsbury good-naturedly calls it.

The beginning and the end of an essay are not to be neglected even in a brief discussion of its structure. The introduction of the periodical essay is generally a statement of the specific occasion for the writing of the paper. Macaulay's introduction states that he writes of Milton because a hitherto undiscovered manuscript of the Puritan pamphleteer had recently been brought to light. So De Quincey writes of Joan of Arc because M. Michelet's treatment of her in his *History of France* arouses his resentment. The conclusion is, by common consent, that part of the discussion in which the writer lays aside his deliberative tone and addresses the imagination and emotions of his readers, bringing his essay to a climax in a panegyric upon his subject and a strong personal appeal for sympathy with his point of view.

The following brief outline of the two essays in hand will serve to substantiate these statements in regard to structure.

## THE STRUCTURE AND STYLE OF "JOAN OF ARC" AND "THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH"

### A. INTRODUCTION.

#### *Purpose of the essay.*

1. to arouse sympathy for Joan of Arc, ¶ 1-2.
2. to controvert M. Michelet's opinion of her, ¶ 3-4.

### B. DISCUSSION.

#### I. *Natural reasons for Joan's mystic patriotism*

Structure of  
Joan of Arc

1. Patriotism fostered by frontier location of Domrémy, ¶ 5-8.
2. Patriotism fostered by the national crisis in France, ¶ 9-10.
3. Mysticism fostered by the solitude of her early home, ¶ 11-13.
4. Mysticism fostered by her lonely occupation of shepherdess, ¶ 14.
5. Her power to distinguish the Dauphin only the result of her meditations, ¶ 15-19.

#### II. *The spiritual struggles of her experience*

(Introduction — brief survey of her career, ¶ 20.)

1. Struggle in combating opposition, ¶ 21.
2. Struggle in facing the cruelties of war, ¶ 22.
3. Struggle in meeting her trial, ¶ 23.
4. Struggle against her longing to die in Domrémy, ¶ 24.
5. Struggle of her martyrdom, ¶ 25-29.

### C. CONCLUSION.

#### *The emotional appeal of the essay*

1. The contrast between the visions of Joan and of the Bishop of Beauvais, ¶ 30-32.

This outline shows at a glance the fundamental topics, the secondary topics, and the relation between the two. It reveals the impassioned point of view which controls the whole essay and the tone of personal championship which pervades it. It makes evident the unity of the discussion. It cannot enumerate

all the digressions, such as the review of the history of Lorraine in ¶ 7, the legend of Charlemagne in ¶ 11, and others. Could we tabulate the stress or the tone of the essay, however, we should find some of these sections ringing out boldly ; we should realize that much of the color and life of the essay belongs to them, and wonder that De Quincey could touch with such readiness and enthusiasm upon so many related ideas.

To attempt an analysis of *The English Mail-Coach* would be as absurd as to try to diagram a musical rhapsody ; for such this wonderful bit of writing really is. Its art, then, consists, not in perfecting a logical and effective arrangement of parts, but in performing a far more delicate feat, — the pursuit of a suggested theme, which, like the theme of a musical composition, must appear not too insistently or too obviously, but must yet be caught here and there, varied and dim sometimes as an echo, but persistent enough to give a subtle unity to the whole. The marvel of De Quincey's triumph in accomplishing this grows upon us with each reading of the essay.

Structure  
of The Eng-  
lish Mail-  
Coach

The term "fugue" De Quincey has used for the title of the third section, but the idea of a fugue is worked out as well through the *The Glory of Motion* and *The Vision of Sudden Death*. They initiate the theme and develop it with their own additions and variations, until the complex harmony comes to a full orchestral close in *The Dream Fugue*.

In *The Glory of Motion* De Quincey strikes chords which are to reverberate throughout the whole essay : — the mail-coach as a dramatic distributor of news in time of war ; young Oxford's ingenuity in making the outside seat on the coach the throne of honor ; the hopeless race of the "flaunting, tawdry thing" from Birmingham with Her Majesty's mail ; the picture of Miss Fanny of the Bath Road and her rosy grandfather with the "crocodile infirmity." Then all these pass with dream-like ease into a bewitching maze ; Fanny, the rose, the crocodile in scarlet livery driving the coach, sphinxes and basilisks cross and recross one another in a beautiful confusion that suggests the full hurried melody of a musical finale. In the second part of this section, *Going Down with Victory*, this theme appears again. The mail-coach, now adorned with laurels, is the glorious bearer of the news of a great victory ; but its note of triumph, vibrating against many listening hearts, works itself out into as many

different songs, — a rhapsody of delicious joy, a dirge of mourning, a chant of sacrifice, a hymn of thanksgiving.

*The Vision of Sudden Death* strikes a seemingly remote key, — different conceptions of sudden death. But gradually it attunes itself to the dream-note as De Quincey illustrates his own conception by an allusion to that element of agonizing possibility of escape from destruction which haunts our dreams. Then the narrative begins. We return to the stage coach and again mount the favored outside seat beside the old Oxford coachman, Cyclops. The dream atmosphere gradually enfolds all, as Cyclops falls asleep and the coach speeds along the silence and solitude of the road, bearing one passenger, drowsy with opium. Upon his meditations of the infinite, born of the quietness of the night, breaks suddenly the sound of approaching wheels. Then follows the wonderful portrayal of the agony, known to our dreams, of calculating the slight chance of escape for the unconscious pair in the approaching gig, the mighty relief of the moment of miraculous deliverance, and then the turn of the road, which sweeps away the vision forever.

With the third section, the fugitive ideas of the first and second are brought together in a wonderful harmony. The musical prelude strikes ever so lightly the old notes of sudden death, suffering martyr-woman, the trumpet call, "shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses," and the "gorgeous mosaics of dreams." Then appears the fiery pinnace, bearing the "unknown lady from the dreadful vision," dissolving with dream-like suddenness into the shadow of Death and disappearing. Second comes the frigate, running athwart the dreamer's course, but veering just in time to avoid collision. The lady of the pinnace stands among the shrouds, rising and sinking through the waves and mists that group themselves into "arches and long cathedral aisles" until — and the dream ends unfinished. The third division opens with the sound of funeral bells soothing the dreamer as he sleeps in the rocking boat; he awakens and beholds through the dusk a girl — the lady of the pinnace? — running to her death in the quicksands ahead. The dream-like race to warn her begins, but the pursuer feels her flying from him as from another peril, and before he can overtake her the quicksands have engulfed her form. But through his tears and the tolling of the funeral bells, the triumphant song of victory — the old note — "swallows up all strife." In the fourth part



all the old chords are struck again. The dream coach waits in the dark for the signal to start, — the word of victory, "Waterloo and Recovered Christendom." Then into the aisles of a cathedral it drives while altar lights burst into flame and choristers chant the song of triumph. On it rolls into the city of the dead, among the bas-reliefs of battles, until it meets the child in the carriage of flowers, as before the coach met the unconscious lovers. And as the dreamer in *The Vision of Sudden Death* shouted his cry of warning, the Dying Trumpeter now rises from his bas-relief field of battle, and blows the note of danger, while the dreamer takes his place in the marble. The child changes to the vision of the lady of the pinnace; she clings to the altar, as she clung to the shrouds of the laboring frigate, until she is rescued by the Angel of Life triumphing over Death. Then comes the final movement, "the completion of the passion of the mighty fugue," — the vision of peace, — as the dreamer, the Dying Trumpeter, and the throng of the quick and the dead move in solemn procession from the cathedral singing halleluiahs to the God of Deliverance. And the last sweet persisting strain is the thanksgiving for the rescue of the "sister unknown" from "desert seas," "the darkness of quicksands" and all forms of "sudden death."

It is evident, then, that the structure of this essay presents a unity too subtle for rigid analysis. The parts, wonderful in themselves, must hold attention for a moment, but in the end surrender their identities to the artistic perfection of the whole. With this type of essay we must content ourselves with loving the "wood-rose" and leaving it "upon its stalk." We can of course tabulate headings and sub-headings, but to present such an outline of *The English Mail-Coach* would be as absurd as to offer the measurements of cap, wings, and wand for an appreciation of the grace and buoyancy of the Bargello *Mercury*.

The dominant impression made by the first reading of the two essays in hand, is that here is a prose different from all other prose, — whose substance is composed of ideas, fancies, judgments, and opinions unlike those of the conventional thinker, and whose expression imitates no master and acknowledges no creed of style. We read *Joan of Arc* and realize in its pages an attitude toward the martyr-maid that does not tally with the routine views of the historians. We read

Originality  
and inde-  
pendence  
of De Quin-  
cey's style

*The English Mail-Coach* and are conscious that, although some of us may be mystics, and all of us "dreamers of dreams," no one of us could have dreamed that dream, or, dreaming it, have pictured its fantasies in words where "more is meant than meets the ear." Even these two essays are enough to convince us that De Quincey is likely to start from an original point of view and hunt new trails; that he will not bind himself to think the thoughts, speak the words, or live in the world of other men. His is the attitude of mind that marks the recluse and the dreamer. "I have passed more of my life," he says, "in absolute and unmitigated solitude, voluntarily and for intellectual purposes, than any person of my age whom I have ever met with, heard of, or read of."

That inner world, however, is not shut to anything which the dreamer chooses to admit from the world outside. Into it are welcomed, through books, the histories of all ages and lands, the facts of all sciences, the theories of all philosophies, the beauties of all arts. And these appear in the material of De Quincey's essays, not as tricks of memory as Macaulay's allusions often seem, but as vital parts of the thought. So numerous are these references **Breadth of knowledge** and quotations that one may well believe that those years of solitude were indeed devoted to "intellectual purposes." And so obscure are some of them that one suspects that the author himself might not always have been ready to furnish their sources. He may not, for instance, have known where he had read of "those mysterious fauns which tempted solitary hunters into visionary and perilous pursuits," or of the "ancient stag" whom Charlemagne knighted. But in his mind those fancies were interwoven with the mystery of the forest whose voices spoke to Joan, so he suggests them to reproduce that atmosphere in his essay. And there lies the artistic triumph of the allusion,—that the strength of its relations and associations should dwarf all mere considerations of identification. To count up the number of allusions in these essays would convince us at once of the multifariousness of De Quincey's knowledge; but to grasp all the inferences he drew from his comparisons, and to sense the color they give to his thought, is to begin to realize its height and depth and breadth. Like the famous muster-rolls of Milton, his Marie Antoinette, Charlotte Corday, Campo Santo, Al Sirat, and the rest of the long list of magic names at his pen's end, "produce upon us an effect wholly independent of



their intrinsic value.”<sup>1</sup> His own definition of a scholar was “not one who depended upon an infinite memory, but upon an infinite and electrical power of combination, of bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the resurrection, what else were dust from dead men’s bones into the unity of breathing life.” What De Quincey said of Burke was equally true of himself: “He viewed all objects of the understanding under more relations than other men and under more complex relations.” So the wonder is not only that his mind was retentive enough to hold so much knowledge, but that it was keen and analytical enough to master it.

To have so broad a perspective of the thought of the world, past and present, implies the vantage-ground of a certain aloofness from the world. In that retirement the mind is most susceptible to impressions of grandeur. Majesty in any form De Quincey loved to contemplate, whether the spiritual majesty of a Joan of Arc or the physical grandeur of such scenes **Love of** as appear and disappear in *The English Mail-Coach*. **mystery**

“He went through the world wrapped in a general religious wonder.”<sup>2</sup> Out of those meditations the sublime figure of his Joan of Arc was born; out of those conscious dreams were woven the mysteries of the lonely ride of the night mail, — and these, dwelling persistently with him, found expression in some moment of inspired eloquence in that passionate rhetoric which gives to his prose all the sublimity of great poetry. “No dignity is perfect,” he writes, “that does not connect itself with the mysterious.” He loved all that was visionary and elusive. Even his actual experiences, as he recounts them, seem to be recalled from some dream, so shadowy and unreal are they. “He had a sure footing in dim and distant regions, where fantasy piles her towers, and raises her colonnades, and wraps all in her weird and wondrous drapery.”

It is said that a mere item in a missionary journal was the basis of De Quincey’s *Flight of a Tartar Tribe*, and that all that wonderful narrative was simply the result of his power to build an impressive structure upon the slight foundation of a single fact. That same inventive genius we feel in *Joan of* **Inventive** *Arc*, and we appreciate what he writes not necessarily **power.** as actual fact, but as his own emotional interpretation of fact. In the *Mail-Coach* we have a pure bit of invention dealing

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay’s *Milton*.

<sup>2</sup> Masson.

with a subject that demands nothing else. Everything that belongs to the realm of the imagination is here. The writer abandons himself utterly to the mystic vagaries of his fancy, let it lead him where it will and let who will follow. And he who does will to follow is carried into a dreamland which none but the mightiest magician could conjure up. Were this one piece of writing lost, the highest type of literary invention would be missing from English literature.

Pathos pervades the atmosphere of both these essays. In *Joan of Arc* it is of the passionate type that is so often felt at the crisis of a great drama. We could hardly weep for La Pucelle any more than for Lady Macbeth; yet our sympathy and pity in each case are aroused to the point of despair. There is nothing sensational or sentimental in the portrayal of Joan's martyrdom, but the intensity of the writer's feeling communicates itself to us and her death appears to us as a sublime spectacle of human suffering too great for words. The quality of pathos in the *Mail-Coach* is different. There we comprehend the melancholy which life must always have held for De Quincey,—pain, bereavement, and all the more subtle forms of anguish known to human experience. Masson has called De Quincey the master of the whole science of sorrow. He might have added that his temperament was heir to more sorrows than most souls know, and that a small grief could be to him an overpowering tragedy.

To be convinced that De Quincey actually possessed an irresistible humor, the student should read the *Essay on Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*, or the accounts of the kingdoms of Gombroon and Tigrosylvania in the *Autobiographic Notes*,—rollicking extravaganzas in a mock-serious tone. Only fragments of humor do we find in *The English Mail-Coach*, such as the account of the race between the two mails or the introduction of coaches into China. In *Joan of Arc* there are a few touches that pretend to humor, and their pretension is the worst thing about them. Each reader must decide for himself whether he thinks De Quincey's remarks about Monsieur D'Arc's mending his own stockings, the pun on Champenoise, and the by-play with Miss Haumette are humorous or not, in good taste or not. To one, at least, they seem to lend weight to the opinions of the critics who have said that sometimes De Quincey's humor "mocks at gravity and pulls the beards of dignitaries."

With such prose as De Quincey's, form and expression are as essential elements as they are in poetry. Like Milton's verse, it should be read aloud to be appreciated. Leslie Stephen says, "One may fancy that if De Quincey's language were emptied of all meaning whatever, the mere sound of the words would move us as the lovely word *Mesopotamia* moved Whitefield's followers." The subtle tone changes of the *Dream Fugue* show how sensitive the writer was to all that appeals to the ear. The musical effect of the *Dream Fugue* is not paralleled by any consecutive passages in *Joan of Arc*, but there we have the majesty of the opening paragraph and the triumphant crescendo of the conclusion as the prelude and close of a mighty pæan. Within the finale is one perfect little strain: "The shepherd girl that had delivered France — she, from her dungeon, from her baiting at the stake, she from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream — saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered." That music echoes in our ears long after the sound of the words has died away, and swings itself into the rhythm of Deborah's song: "At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet, he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead."

Musical  
effect of  
style

There is, happily, no effort apparent in this musical effect. De Quincey's ease is captivating. He is at home in all the wonders of his expression, and all unconscious of any listener. He said, "My way of writing is to think aloud." The atmosphere of relaxation pervades all his works. His prose wanders here and there at will. De Quincey is commonly condemned for his digressions; and a detailed analysis of these essays would show many instances where they are almost annoying. But in the end every stray excursion from the direct path has discovered many a beauty of thought or expression that would otherwise have been lost. Moreover, his digressions are never awkward stumblings-about in the dark, but always graceful, sure detours to include some point of view well worth winning. Masson describes this ease with words that we cannot resist quoting. "If one could fancy such a thing as a flow of ivy or other foliage, rich, soft, glancing, but not too dense, advancing quietly over a surface and covering it equally, but with a power of shooting itself rapidly to selected points and pinnacles, that might be an image of De Quincey's language overspreading

Ease

a subject. It moves quietly, enfolding all it meets with easy grace, and leaving a vesture pleasantly soft and fine, rather than gaudily varied or obtrusive; but it can collect itself into rings of overgrowth or shoot into devices and festoons."

The occasional passionate force to which these last words refer is splendidly exemplified in our essays. The mighty feeling in the close of *Joan of Arc*, the emotion that **Passionate force** creeps into even the narrative passages of the *Mail-Coach*, to say nothing of the sustained intensity of the *Dream-Fugue*, can hardly be paralleled in English prose. We naturally look to poetry for the expression of such exalted feeling. It is characteristic of De Quincey, however, that this passion never loses its intellectual balance, nor ever, even at its height, its "artistic self-possession." There is a fire and a glow and a warmth, but it is all tempered to form and dignity.

In conclusion, then, De Quincey stands among the essayists of the early nineteenth century as the one who, although possessed of the greatest intellectual powers, yet counted above all else the æsthetic qualities of the art of composition. His was an inborn instinct for form, and a perfect sense of the beauty of sound. "His language," to quote Leslie Stephen again, "deserves a commendation sometimes bestowed by ladies upon a rich garment, that it is capable of standing up by itself." How he enriched and extended the power and scope of the English language we may best appreciate when we reflect that he may be said to have created a new form in English literature, the prose poem.

For those who wish to make a detailed study of the elements of De Quincey's style the following suggestions may prove helpful. Only a few illustrations of each point are given, as the whole value of analytical work of this kind depends upon the student's ability to recognize examples for himself.

# 1. DE QUINCEY'S PARAGRAPHS

## 1. Definite announcements of paragraph topic

*Illustration*: "I am not going to write the history of La Pucelle. . . . But my purpose is narrower." p. 4.

## 2. Digressions from topic

*Illustration*: "But stay . . . the real one is Joanna, the Pucelle d'Orleans for herself." pp. 2-4.

## 3. Formal return from digressions

*Illustration*: "But now, confining our attention to M. Michelet," p. 3.

## 4. Effective beginnings of paragraphs

*Illustration*: "What is to be thought of her?" p. 1.

## 5. Progression of the paragraph to a climax

*Illustration*: "It is not requisite . . . what remained was — to suffer." pp. 15–16.

## 6. Strong endings of paragraphs

*Illustration*: "No, she did not, though one should rise from the dead to swear it." p. 24.

## 7. Abrupt, challenging endings of paragraphs

*Illustrations*: "If you can . . . why have you not?" p. 21.

"But the lady ——" p. 65.

## 8. Careful connections between paragraphs

*Illustrations*: "Such being at that time" etc. p. 31.

"This sympathy with France" etc. p. 6.

## II. DE QUINCEY'S SENTENCES

## 1. Frequent use of the long sentence

## a. Lengthened by parenthesis

*Illustration*: "Even the wild story" etc. p. 7.

## b. Lengthened by relative clauses

*Illustration*: "At this particular season" etc. p. 58.

## c. Lengthened by parallel clauses

*Illustration*: "The shepherd girl that had" etc. p. 25.

## d. Lengthened by enumeration

*Illustration*: "On the 29th of June" etc. p. 16.

## 2. Long sentences lacking unity

*Illustrations*: "In defiance of all" etc. p. 41.

"If the reader turns to" etc. pp. 14–15.

## 3. Periodic form of long sentences

*Illustration*: "How if it were the noble" etc. p. 21.

## 4. Use of the balanced sentence

*Illustrations*: "All that was to be done" etc. p. 16.

"She pricks for sheriffs: Joan pricked for a king." p. 13.

5. Use of the short sentence
  - a. For introduction  
*Illustration*: "Now came her trial." p. 18.
  - b. For transition  
*Illustration*: "Great wits jump." p. 32.
  - c. For conclusion  
*Illustration*: "And the darkness comprehended it."  
p. 70.
  - d. For emphasis  
*Illustration*: "Both are from English pens." p. 22.
6. Use of the loose sentence  
*Illustration*: "'There was an impression . . . could not have been booked.'" pp. 33-35. This succession of loose sentences gives the easy, conversational tone.

### III. DE QUINCEY'S WORDS

His vocabulary is computed to be larger than either Carlyle's or Macaulay's.

1. Use of Latin derivatives
  - a. For sake of sonorous sound  
*Illustrations*: "perseverance of his indomitable malice" p. 4.  
"diffusively influential" p. 29.  
"illustrious quarternion" p. 30.
  - b. For precision of meaning  
*Illustrations*: "confluent" p. 57.  
"decussated" p. 5.  
"prædial" p. 11.
  - c. Technical terms  
*Illustrations*: "Onus" p. 24.  
"Radix of the series" p. 60.
2. Use of foreign words  
*Illustrations*: "coup d'essai" p. 12-13.  
"βιαθάρως" p. 51.  
"fey" p. 48.
3. Use of coined words  
*Illustrations*: "sur-rebribed" p. 33.  
"lawny thickets" p. 39.  
"prelibation" p. 44.
4. Occasional slang: often criticised as a defect of De Quincey's style.  
*Illustration*: "raff" p. 31.

#### IV. DE QUINCEY'S FIGURES OF SPEECH

These are frequent and natural; sometimes, as in "straight as an arrow" (p. 61), almost commonplace; sometimes most unusual. Examples of the following can be found at every turn: but each example should be discussed by itself.

1. Personifications
2. Similes
3. Metaphors
4. Climax
5. Apostrophe
6. Allusion
7. Alliteration: the most conspicuous of many alliterated passages is that on p. 58, "And to strengthen . . . peace," where the repetition of the *s* gives the suggestion of a hush. On p. 71, "Every sarcophagus," etc., repeats the word *battle* until it gives the effect of alliteration.

#### OUTLINE FOR GENERAL STUDY OF AN ESSAY

THE following outline is offered, not with perfect assurance that it will cover all points of discussion, but with the hope that it may be of some assistance in planning a careful study of any essay.

##### A. DISCUSSION OF SUBJECT-MATTER

1. State the line of thought in the introduction.
2. State the fundamental topics of the discussion.
3. State the related topics of the discussion.
4. State the point of view from which the subject is discussed.
5. State the line of thought in the conclusion.

##### B. DISCUSSION OF FORM

1. Decide by analysis the relative lengths of introduction, discussion, and conclusion.
2. Decide by analysis the relative importance of the fundamental topics.
3. Decide by analysis the proportion of relative to fundamental topics.



4. Decide by analysis the amount of digression from main theme.
5. Test the compactness of the structure by an examination of relations and connectives between the parts.

### C. DISCUSSION OF STYLE

#### 1. Paragraphs

- a.* Are the paragraphs well unified ?
- b.* Do they progress to climaxes ?
- c.* Is there variety in paragraph length ?
- d.* Where are the topics of the paragraphs usually announced ?
- e.* What different forms of development of the topic are used : repetition, cause and effect, detail and circumstance, negative statement, incident or example, comparison or analogy ?

#### 2. Sentences

- a.* Is there variety of sentence form ?
- b.* If not, what form predominates and what quality does it give to the author's style ?
- c.* Quote from the text examples of the short sentence, stating why each is used.
- d.* Quote from the text examples of the long sentence, stating why each is used.
- e.* Quote from the text examples of the loose sentence, stating why each is used.
- f.* Quote from the text examples of the periodic sentence, stating why each is used.
- g.* Quote from the text examples of the balanced sentence, stating why each is used.

#### 3. Words

- a.* Does the author's vocabulary seem large or small ? Usual or unusual ?
- b.* Quote examples of words that are particularly well chosen.
- c.* Quote examples of unusual words, and comment upon their fitness.
- d.* Quote any foreign words or phrases. Why were they used ? Would the English equivalent have served the author's purpose ?

#### 4. Ornaments of style

- a.* Figures of Speech

- (1) Are they frequent or few ?
- (2) Are they used for clearness, or beauty and adornment ?
- (3) Are they natural or forced ? Conventional or original ?

*b.* Allusions

- (1) Are they numerous or few ?
- (2) From what sources are they drawn ?
- (3) Are they readily recognized or obscure ?
- (4) Are they introduced for their own sake, or to throw light upon the subject ?

*c.* Quotations

- (1) Are they numerous or few ?
- (2) Are they from prominent or obscure writers ?
- (3) What tone do they impart to the essay ?
- (4) Are they necessary to the discussion ?
- (5) Are they introduced naturally or are they forced ?

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. *The Collected Works of Thomas de Quincey*. Author's edition. Edinburgh, 1862-71. Published by Adam and Charles Black. 16 vols.
2. *The Works of Thomas de Quincey*. Boston, 1876. Published by Ticknor and Fields. 12 vols.
3. *Thomas de Quincey: his Life and Writings*. H. A. Page (A. H. Japp)
4. *Thomas de Quincey*. David Masson. English Men of Letters
5. *De Quincey and his Friends*. James Hogg  
This volume contains the famous sketch of De Quincey by John Hill Burton, entitled "Papaverius."
6. *De Quincey Memorials*. Collected by H. A. Page
7. *Essays in English Literature*. First Series. George E. B. Saintsbury
8. *Hours in a Library*, Vol. i, Leslie Stephen
9. *Essays about Men, Women, and Books*. Augustine Birrell
10. *Essays in Biography and Criticism*. Peter Bayne
11. *Representative English Prose*. Theodore W. Hunt
12. *Manual of English Prose Literature*. William Minto

## SUPPLEMENTARY READING

THE following list of readings is suggested for the use of students who may wish to become better acquainted with De Quincey's prose. The references are to the volumes of De Quincey's works published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

1. *Autobiographic Sketches*, Vol. ii  
The Affliction of Childhood, pp. 27-51  
The "Horrid Pugilistic Brother," pp. 59-72  
Warfare with the Manchester Factory Boys, pp. 74-95  
The Kingdom of Gombroon, pp. 96-112  
Oxford, pp. 499-505, 521-525, and 561-572
2. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Vol. i  
Preliminary Confessions, pp. 15-63
3. *Suspiria de Profundis*, Vol. i  
Levana and our Ladies of Sorrow, pp. 237-247  
Savannah-La-Mar, pp. 253-257
4. *On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts*, Vol. xi, pp. 529-570
5. *On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*, Vol. iv, pp. 533-541
6. *The Flight of a Tartar Tribe*, Vol. xii, pp. 1-73. Also in *Riverside Literature Series*, No. 110
7. *The Beauties of De Quincey*. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. These selections are representative of De Quincey's biographical notes, dreams, narratives, critiques, and reminiscences: the volume is prefaced by a sketch of De Quincey's life.

# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE, 1819-1859

## DE QUINCEY'S PUBLICATIONS

## CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS

1819 Editor of the *Westmoreland Gazette*

1821 *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, Herder, Richter, with *Analects* (London Magazine)

1822-24 *Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected*, Rosicrucians and Free Masons, etc. (London Magazine)

1826-27 *Lessing with translations from Laocoön* (Blackwood's)

1827 *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*

1828-32 *Toilette of a Hebrew Lady*, Richard Bentley, Dr. Parr, The Cæsars, Charlemagne, etc. (Blackwood's)

1832 *Klosterheim*

1834-40 *Autobiographical Sketches and Reminiscences*

1837 *Shakespeare, Goethe, Pope* (Encyclopædia Britannica)  
*The Revolt of the Tartars* (Blackwood's)

1840-45 *The Essenes, Style, Rhetoric, Homer and the Homeridæ, Cicero, Coleridge and Opium-Eating* (Blackwood's)

1844 *Logic of Political Economy* (Blackwood's)

1845-46 *Notes on Literary Portraits*, Godwin, Shelley, Keats, etc., *System of the Heavens* (Tait's), *Suspiria de Profundis, a Sequel to the Confessions* (Blackwood's)

1847 *Joan of Arc, The Spanish Nun, Protestantism*, etc. (Tait's)

1819 Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*

1819 Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* and *Ivanhoe*

1819 Irving's *Sketch Book*

1820-22 Lamb's *Essays of Elia*

1821 Landor's *Imaginary Conversations*

1821 Hazlitt's *Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*

1821 Shelley's *Adonais*

1821 Byron's *Don Juan*

1822-35 Wilson's *Noctes Ambrosianæ*

1824 Hazlitt's *Table Talk*

1825 Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*

1825 Scott's *The Talisman*

1826 Scott's *Woodstock*

1826 Disraeli's *Vivian Grey*

1827 Tennyson's *Poems by Two Brothers*

1829 Southey's *Colloquies on Society*

1830 Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical*

1832 Tennyson's *Poems*

1832 Browning's *Pauline*

1833 Lamb's *Last Essays of Elia*

1833 Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*

1834 Bulwer's *Last Days of Pompeii*

1835 Browning's *Paracelsus*

1835 Bulwer's *Rienzi*

1837 Carlyle's *French Revolution*

1837 Dickens's *Pickwick*

1837 Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*

1840 Poe's *Tales*

1840 Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*

1840 Browning's *Sordello*

1841 Browning's *Pippa Passes*

1841 Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* and *Old Curiosity Shop*

1843 Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, Vol. i

1847 Leigh Hunt's *Men, Women and Books*

1847 Longfellow's *Erangeline*

1847 Tennyson's *Princess*

DE QUINCEY'S PUBLICATIONS	CONTEMPORARY PUBLICATIONS
1849 <i>The English Mail-Coach</i>	1848 Dickens's <i>Dombey and Son</i> 1848 Thackeray's <i>Vanity Fair</i> 1848 Brontë's <i>Jane Eyre</i> 1849 Macaulay's <i>History of England</i> , Vol. i 1849 Thackeray's <i>Pendennis</i>
1850 <i>Sir William Hamilton</i> , etc. (Hogg's Instructor)	1850 Hawthorne's <i>Scarlet Letter</i> 1850 Tennyson's <i>In Memoriam</i> 1850 Dickens's <i>David Copperfield</i> 1850 Leigh Hunt's <i>Autobiography</i>
1851-55. <i>American Edition of De Quincey's Works</i> , Boston	1852 Thackeray's <i>Henry Esmond</i> 1852 Reade's <i>Peg Woffington</i> 1853 Dickens's <i>Bleak House</i> 1853 Mrs. Gaskell's <i>Cranford</i> 1853 Kingsley's <i>Hypatia</i> 1855 Browning's <i>Men and Women</i>
1853-59 <i>Selections Grave and Gay from the Writings of Thomas De Quincey</i> . Edinburgh	1855 Kingsley's <i>Westward Ho</i> 1855 Thackeray's <i>The Newcomes</i> 1856 Mrs. Browning's <i>Aurora Leigh</i> 1857 Dickens's <i>Little Dorrit</i> 1858 Thackeray's <i>The Virginians</i> 1858 Carlyle's <i>Frederick the Great</i> 1858 Morris's <i>Defence of Guinevere</i> 1859 Tennyson's <i>Idylls of the King</i> : earlier parts 1859 George Eliot's <i>Adam Bede</i> 1859 Dickens's <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i> 1859 Meredith's <i>Richard Feverel</i>

"We think it were difficult to match in our late literature, if indeed in our whole literature, the pathetic effect realized in his paper on the Maid of Orleans. De Quincey has there enabled us to define, clearly and conclusively, the function which such as she have, even in their death, performed for mankind. We have so much to harden us in this world, so stern is the struggle of existence, so sadly do the morning dewdrops and the early flowers vanish or wither in life's hot day, that you actually confer a precious boon and benefit on a man, when you make him shed a noble tear." — Bayne, *Essays in Biography and Criticism*.

"In that succession of dreams which we have mentioned (the "Dream-Fugue") and which seems to us to constitute De Quincey's masterpiece, there is, over all the splendor and terror, a clear serenity of light which belongs to the very highest style of poetic beauty. The conceptions are very daring, but each form of spurious originality is absent,—the fantastic and the grotesque; there is the mystery of the land of dreams, yet so powerful is the imagination which strikes the whole into being that the

wondrous picture has the vividness and truth of reality ; while, with every change of scene and emotion, the language changes too, — now rich, glowing and bold, when the idea is free, strong joyousness ; now melting into a gentle, spiritual melody of more than Æolian softness and now rising to a Homeric swell that echoes the everlasting gallop of the steeds which drag that triumphal car. This “Dream-Fugue” is of no great compass, but we think that it would alone have been sufficient to secure a literary immortality. Taken in connection with the incident which was its occasion ; considered as a poetic idealization of reality and an effort of linguistic power ; tried by the severe rules of art, as demanding the very highest manifestation of order and harmony possible by man, we think we could maintain against all comers that this is, for its size, the noblest production in English prose. — Bayne, *Essays in Biography and Criticism*.





## JOAN OF ARC

### IN REFERENCE TO M. MICHELET'S HISTORY OF FRANCE

WHAT is to be thought of *her*? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that — like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa — rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good-will*, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendor and a noonday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent: no! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* truth, that never once — no, not for a moment of weakness — didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honor from man. Coronets for thee! O no! Honors, if they come when all is over, are for those that

share thy blood. Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honor, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country, thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short: and the sleep which is in the grave is long! Let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long. This pure creature — pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious — never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not in vision, perhaps, the aerial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there, until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints; — these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard forever.

Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sat upon it: but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sat upon it, was for *her*; but, on the contrary, that she was for *them*; not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France, and for centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until, in another century, the wrath of God and man combined to wither them; but well Joanna knew, early at Domrémy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for *her*. Flower nor bud, bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for *her*.

But stay. What reason is there for taking up this subject of Joanna precisely in the spring of 1847? Might it not have been left till the spring of 1947; or, perhaps, left till called for?

Yes, but it *is* called for; and clamorously. You are aware, reader, that amongst the many original thinkers whom modern France has produced, one of the reputed leaders is M. Michelet. All these writers are of a revolutionary cast; not in a political sense merely, but in all senses; mad, oftentimes, as March hares; crazy with the laughing-gas of recovered liberty; drunk with the wine-cup of their mighty revolution, snorting, whinnying, throwing up their heels, like wild horses in the boundless Pampas, and running races of defiance with snipes, or with the winds, or with their own shadows, if they can find nothing else to challenge. Some time or other I, that have leisure to read, may introduce *you*, that have not, to two or three dozen of these writers; of whom I can assure you beforehand, that they are often profound, and at intervals are even as impassioned as if they were come of our best English blood. But now, confining our attention to M. Michelet, we in England — who know him best by his worst book, the book against priests, &c. — know him disadvantageously. That book is a rhapsody of incoherence. But his “History of France” is quite another thing. A man, in whatsoever craft he sails, cannot stretch away out of sight when he is linked to the windings of the shore by towing ropes of history. Facts, and the consequences of facts, draw the writer back to the falconer’s lure from the giddiest heights of speculation. Here, therefore — in his “France” — if not always free from flightiness, if now and then off like a rocket for an airy wheel in the clouds, M. Michelet, with natural politeness, never forgets that he has left a large audience waiting for him on earth, and gazing upwards in anxiety for his return: return, therefore, he does. But history, though clear of certain temptations in one direction, has separate dangers of its own. It is impossible so to write a history of France, or of England — works becoming every hour more indispensable to the inevitably political man of this day — without perilous openings for error. If I, for instance, on the part of England, should happen to turn my labors in that channel, and (on the model of Lord Percy going to Chevy Chase)

“A vow to God should make  
My pleasure in the Michelet woods  
Three summer days to take,”

probably, from simple delirium, I might hunt M. Michelet into *delirium tremens*. Two strong angels stand by the side of his

tory, whether French history or English, as heraldic supporters : the angel of research on the left hand, that must read millions of dusty parchments, and of pages blotted with lies ; the angel of meditation on the right hand, that must cleanse these lying records with fire, even as of old the draperies of asbestos were cleansed, and must quicken them into regenerated life. Willingly I acknowledge that no man will ever avoid innumerable errors of detail ; with so vast a compass of ground to traverse, this is impossible ; but such errors (though I have a bushel on hand, at M. Michelet's service) are not the game I chase ; it is the bitter and unfair spirit in which M. Michelet writes against England. Even *that*, after all, is but my secondary object ; the real one is Joanna the Pucelle d'Orleans for herself.

I am not going to write the History of *La Pucelle* : to do this, or even circumstantially to report the history of her persecution and bitter death, of her struggle with false witnesses and with ensnaring judges, it would be necessary to have before us *all* the documents, and therefore the collection only now forthcoming in Paris. But *my* purpose is narrower. There have been great thinkers, disdaining the careless judgments of contemporaries, who have thrown themselves boldly on the judgment of a far posterity, that should have had time to review, to ponder, to compare. There have been great actors on the stage of tragic humanity that might with the same depth of confidence have appealed from the levity of compatriot friends — too heartless for the sublime interest of their story, and too impatient for the labor of sifting its perplexities — to the magnanimity and justice of enemies. To this class belongs the Maid of Arc. The ancient Romans were too faithful to the ideal of grandeur in themselves not to relent, after a generation or two, before the grandeur of Hannibal. Mithridates — a more doubtful person — yet merely for the magic perseverance of his indomitable malice, won from the same Romans the only real honor that ever he received on earth. And we English have ever shown the same homage to stubborn enmity. To work unflinchingly for the ruin of England ; to say through life, by word and by deed, *Delenda est Anglia Victrix* ! that one purpose of malice, faithfully pursued, has quartered some people upon our national funds of homage as by a perpetual annuity. Better than an inheritance of service rendered to England herself, has sometimes proved the most insane hatred to England. Hyder Ali, even his son Tippoo,

though so far inferior, and Napoleon, have all benefited by this disposition amongst ourselves to exaggerate the merit of diabolic enmity. Not one of these men was ever capable, in a solitary instance, of praising an enemy [what do you say to *that*, reader?], and yet in *their* behalf, we consent to forget, not their crimes only, but (which is worse) their hideous bigotry and anti-magnanimous egotism, for nationality it was not. Suffrein, and some half dozen of other French nautical heroes, because rightly they did us all the mischief they could (which was really great), are names justly revered in England. On the same principle, La Pucelle d'Orleans, the victorious enemy of England, has been destined to receive her deepest commemoration from the magnanimous justice of Englishmen.

Joanna, as we in England should call her, but, according to her own statement, Jeanne (or, as M. Michelet asserts, Jean) D'Arc, was born at Domrémy, a village on the marches of Lorraine and Champagne, and dependent upon the town of Vaucouleurs. I have called her a Lorrainer, not simply because the word is prettier, but because Champagne too odiously reminds us English of what are for *us* imaginary wines, which, undoubtedly, *La Pucelle* tasted as rarely as we English; we English, because the Champagne of London is chiefly grown in Devonshire; *La Pucelle*, because the Champagne of Champagne never, by any chance, flowed into the fountain of Domrémy, from which only she drank. M. Michelet will have her to be a *Champenoise*, and for no better reason than that she "took after her father," who happened to be a *Champenois*.

These disputes, however, turn on refinements too nice. Domrémy stood upon the frontiers, and, like other frontiers, produced a *mixed* race representing the *cis* and the *trans*. A river (it is true) formed the boundary-line at this point—the river Meuse; and *that*, in old days, might have divided the populations; but in these days it did not: there were bridges, there were ferries, and weddings crossed from the right bank to the left. Here lay two great roads, not so much for travellers that were few, as for armies that were too many by half. These two roads, one of which was the great high road between France and Germany, *decussated* at this very point; which is a learned way of saying, that they formed a St. Andrew's cross, or letter X. I hope the compositor will choose a good large X in which case the point of intersection, the *locus* of



conflux and intersection for these four diverging arms, will finish the reader's geographical education, by showing him to a hair's-breadth where it was that Domrémy stood. Those roads, so grandly situated as great trunk arteries between two mighty realms, and haunted forever by wars, or rumors of wars, decussated (for anything I know to the contrary) absolutely under Joanna's bedroom window; one rolling away to the right, past Monsieur D'Arc's old barn, and the other unaccountably preferring to sweep round that odious man's pigsty to the left.

On whichever side of the border chance had thrown Joanna, the same love to France would have been nurtured. For it is a strange fact, noticed by M. Michelet and others, that the Dukes of Bar and Lorraine had for generations pursued the policy of eternal warfare with France on their own account, yet also of eternal amity and league with France, in case anybody else presumed to attack her. Let peace settle upon France, and before long you might rely upon seeing the little vixen Lorraine flying at the throat of France. Let France be assailed by a formidable enemy, and instantly you saw a Duke of Lorraine insisting on having his own throat cut in support of France; which favor accordingly was cheerfully granted to him in three great successive battles—twice by the English, viz., at Crécy and Agincourt, once by the Sultan at Nicopolis.

This sympathy with France during great eclipses, in those that during ordinary seasons were always teasing her with brawls and guerilla inroads, strengthened the natural piety to France of those that were confessedly the children of her own house. The outposts of France, as one may call the great frontier provinces, were of all localities the most devoted to the *Fleurs de Lys*. To witness, at any great crisis, the generous devotion to these lilies of the little fiery cousin that in gentler weather was for ever tilting at the breast of France, could not but fan the zeal of France's legitimate daughters; whilst to occupy a post of honor on the frontiers against an old, hereditary enemy of France, would naturally stimulate this zeal by a sentiment of martial pride, by a sense of danger always threatening, and of hatred always smouldering. That great four-headed road was a perpetual memento to patriotic ardor. To say, this way lies the road to Paris, and that other way to Aix-la-Chapelle—this to Prague, that to Vienna—nourished the warfare of the heart by daily ministrations of sense. The eye

that watched for the gleams of lance or helmet from the hostile frontier, the ear that listened for the groaning of wheels, made the high road itself, with its relations to centres so remote, into a manual of patriotic duty.

The situation, therefore, *locally*, of Joanna was full of profound suggestions to a heart that listened for the stealthy steps of change and fear that too surely were in motion. But, if the place were grand, the time, the burden of the time, was far more so. The air overhead in its upper chambers was *hurtling* with the obscure sound; was dark with sullen fermenting of storms that had been gathering for a hundred and thirty years. The battle of Agincourt in Joanna's childhood had re-opened the wounds of France. Crécy and Poitiers, those withering overthrows for the chivalry of France, had, before Agincourt occurred, been tranquillized by more than half a century; but this resurrection of their trumpet wails made the whole series of battles and endless skirmishes take their stations as parts in one drama. The graves that had closed sixty years ago, seemed to fly open in sympathy with a sorrow that echoed their own. The monarchy of France labored in extremity, rocked and reeled like a ship fighting with the darkness of monsoons. The madness of the poor king (Charles VI) falling in at such a crisis, like the case of women laboring in childbirth during the storming of a city, trebled the awfulness of the time. Even the wild story of the incident which had immediately occasioned the explosion of this madness—the case of a man unknown, gloomy, and perhaps maniacal himself, coming out of a forest at noonday, laying his hand upon the bridle of the king's horse, checking him for a moment to say, "Oh, king, thou art betrayed," and then vanishing, no man knew whither, as he had appeared for no man knew what—fell in with the universal prostration of mind that laid France on her knees, as before the slow unweaving of some ancient prophetic doom. The famines, the extraordinary diseases, the insurrections of the peasantry up and down Europe—these were chords struck from the same mysterious harp; but these were transitory chords. There have been others of deeper and more ominous sound. The termination of the Crusades, the destruction of the Templars, the Papal interdicts, the tragedies caused or suffered by the house of Anjou, and by the emperor—these were full of a more permanent significance. But, since



then, the colossal figure of feudalism was seen standing, as it were, on tiptoe, at Crécy, for flight from earth: that was a revolution unparalleled; yet *that* was a trifle, by comparison with the more fearful revolutions that were mining below the church. By her own internal schisms, by the abominable spectacle of a double pope — so that no man, except through political bias, could even guess which was Heaven's vicegerent, and which the creature of hell — the church was rehearsing, as in still earlier forms she had already rehearsed, those vast rents in her foundations which no man should ever heal.

These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies, that to the scientific gazer first caught the colors of the *new* morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike of sweeping glooms overhead dwelt upon all meditative minds, even upon those that could not distinguish the tendencies nor decipher the forms. It was, therefore, not her own age alone, as affected by its immediate calamities, that lay with such weight upon Joanna's mind: but her own age, as one section in a vast mysterious drama, unweaving through a century back, and drawing nearer continually to some dreadful crisis. Cataracts and rapids were heard roaring ahead; and signs were seen far back, by help of old men's memories, which answered secretly to signs now coming forward on the eye, even as locks answer to keys. It was not wonderful that in such a haunted solitude, with such a haunted heart, Joanna should see angelic visions and hear angelic voices. These voices whispered to her forever the duty, self-imposed, of delivering France. Five years she listened to these monitory voices with internal struggles. At length she could resist no longer. Doubt gave way; and she left her home forever in order to present herself at the dauphin's court.

The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard; was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard; and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. She read nothing, for she could not read; but she had heard others read parts of the Roman martyrology. She wept in sympathy with the sad *Misereres* of the Romish church; she rose to heaven with the glad triumphant *Te Deums* of Rome: she drew her comfort and her vital strength from the rites of the same church. But, next after these spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advan-

tages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies, that the parish priest (*cure*) was obliged to read mass there once a year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds. Fairies are important, even in a statistical view: certain weeds mark poverty in the soil, fairies mark its solitude. As surely as the wolf retires before cities, does the fairy sequester herself from the haunts of the licensed victualler. A village is too much for her nervous delicacy: at most, she can tolerate a distant view of a hamlet. We may judge, therefore, by the uneasiness and extra trouble which they gave to the parson, in what strength the fairies mustered at Domrémy; and, by a satisfactory consequence, how thinly sown with men and women must have been that region even in its inhabited spots. But the forests of Domrémy — those were the glories of the land, for in them abode mysterious power and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. “Abbeys there were, and abbey windows,” — “like Moorish temples of the Hindoos,” that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness. This sort of religious talisman being secured, a man the most afraid of ghosts (like myself, suppose, or the reader) becomes armed into courage to wander for days in their sylvan recesses. The mountains of the Vosges, on the eastern frontier of France, have never attracted much notice from Europe, except in 1813–14 for a few brief months, when they fell within Napoleon’s line of defence against the Allies. But they are interesting for this, amongst other features, that they do not, like some loftier ranges, repel woods: the forests and the hills are on sociable terms. *Live and let live*, is their motto. For this reason, in part, these tracts in Lorraine were a favorite hunting-ground with the Carlovigian princes. About six hundred years before Joanna’s childhood, Charlemagne was known to have hunted there. That, of itself, was a grand incident in the traditions of a forest or a chase. In these vast forests, also, were to be found (if anywhere to be found) those mysterious fawns that tempted solitary hunters

into visionary and perilous pursuits. Here was seen (if anywhere seen) that ancient stag who was already nine hundred years old, but possibly a hundred or two more, when met by Charlemagne; and the thing was put beyond doubt by the inscription upon his golden collar. I believe Charlemagne knighted the stag; and, if ever he is met again by a king, he ought to be made an earl—or, being upon the marches of France, a marquis. Observe, I don't absolutely vouch for all these things: my own opinion varies. On a fine breezy forenoon I am audaciously sceptical; but, as twilight sets in, my credulity grows steadily, till it becomes equal to anything that could be desired. And I have heard candid sportsmen declare that, outside of these very forests, they laughed loudly at all the dim tales connected with their haunted solitudes; but, on reaching a spot notoriously eighteen miles deep within them, they agreed with Sir Roger de Coverley, that a good deal might be said on both sides.

Such traditions, or any others that (like the stag) connect distant generations with each other, are, for that cause, sublime; and the sense of the shadowy, connected with such appearances that reveal themselves or not according to circumstances, leaves a coloring of sanctity over ancient forests, even in those minds that utterly reject the legend as a fact.

But, apart from all distinct stories of that order, in any solitary frontier between two great empires, as here, for instance, or in the desert between Syria and the Euphrates, there is an inevitable tendency in minds of any deep sensibility to people the solitudes with phantom images of powers that were of old so vast. Joanna, therefore, in her quiet occupation of a shepherdess, would be led continually to brood over the political condition of her country, by the traditions of the past no less than by the mementoes of the local present.

M. Michelet, indeed, says that La Pucelle was *not* a shepherdess. I beg his pardon: she *was*. What he rests upon, I guess pretty well: it is the evidence of a woman called Haumette, the most confidential friend of Joanna. Now, she is a good witness, and a good girl, and I like her; for she makes a natural and affectionate report of Joanna's ordinary life. But still, however good she may be as a witness, Joanna is better; and she, when speaking to the dauphin, calls herself in the Latin report *Bergereta*. Even Haumette confesses that Joanna tended sheep in her girlhood. And I believe, that if Miss Hau-

mette were taking coffee alone with me this very evening (February 12, 1847) — in which there would be no subject for scandal nor for maiden blushes, because I am an intense philosopher, and Miss H. would be hard upon four hundred and fifty years old — she would admit the following comment upon her evidence to be right. A Frenchman, about forty years ago, M. Simond, in his “Travels,” mentions incidently the following hideous scene as one steadily observed and watched by himself in chivalrous France, not very long before the French Revolution: A peasant was ploughing; the team that drew his plough was a donkey and a woman. Both were regularly harnessed: both pulled alike. This is bad enough; but the Frenchman adds, that, in distributing his lashes, the peasant was obviously desirous of being impartial; or, if either of the yoke-fellows had a right to complain, certainly it was not the donkey. Now, in any country where such degradation of females could be tolerated by the state of manners, a woman of delicacy would shrink from acknowledging, either for herself or her friend, that she had ever been addicted to any mode of labor not strictly domestic; because, if once owning herself a prædial servant, she would be sensible that this confession extended by probability in the hearer’s thoughts to the having incurred indignities of this horrible kind. Haumette clearly thinks it more dignified for Joanna to have been darning the stockings of her horny-hoofed father, Monsieur D’Arc, than keeping sheep, lest she might then be suspected of having ever done something worse. But, luckily, there was no danger of *that*: Joanna never was in service; and my opinion is that her father should have mended his own stockings, since probably he was the party to make holes in them, as many a better man than D’Arc does; meaning by *that* not myself, because, though probably a better man than D’Arc, I protest against doing anything of the kind. If I lived even with Friday in Juan Fernandez, either Friday must do all the darning, or else it must go undone. The better men that I meant were the sailors in the British navy, every man of whom mends his own stockings. Who else is to do it? Do you suppose, reader, that the junior lords of the admiralty are under articles to darn for the navy?

The reason, meantime, for my systematic hatred of D’Arc is this. There was a story current in France before the Revolution, framed to ridicule the pauper aristocracy, who happened to have

long pedigrees and short rent rolls, viz., that a head of such a house, dating from the Crusades, was overheard saying to his son, a Chevalier of St. Louis, "*Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger!*" Now, it is clearly made out by the surviving evidence that D'Arc would much have preferred continuing to say, "*Ma fille, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*" to saying, "*Pucelle d'Orléans, as-tu sauvé les fleurs-de-lys?*" There is an old English copy of verses which argues thus:—

"If the man that turnips cries,  
Cry not when his father dies—  
Then 't is plain the man had rather  
Have a turnip than his father."

I cannot say that the logic in these verses was ever *entirely* to my satisfaction. I do not see my way through it as clearly as could be wished. But I see my way most clearly through D'Arc; and the result is—that he would greatly have preferred not merely a turnip to his father, but saving a pound or so of bacon to saving the Oriflamme of France.

It is probable (as M. Michelet suggests) that the title of Virgin, or *Pucelle*, had in itself, and apart from the miraculous stories about her, a secret power over the rude soldiery and partisan chiefs of that period; for in such a person they saw a representative manifestation of the Virgin Mary, who in a course of centuries had grown steadily upon the popular heart.

As to Joanna's supernatural detection of the dauphin (Charles VII) amongst three hundred lords and knights, I am surprised at the credulity which could ever lend itself to that theatrical juggle. Who admires more than myself the sublime enthusiasm, the rapturous faith in herself, of this pure creature? But I am far from admiring stage artifices, which not *La Pucelle*, but the court, must have arranged; nor can surrender myself to the conjurer's *legerdemain*, such as may be seen every day for a shilling. Southey's "Joan of Arc" was published in 1796. Twenty years after, talking with Southey, I was surprised to find him still owning a secret bias in favor of Joan, founded on her detection of the dauphin. The story, for the benefit of the reader new to the case, was this: *La Pucelle* was first made known to the dauphin, and presented to his court, at Chinon: and here came her first trial. By way of testing her supernatural pretensions, she was to find out the royal personage amongst the whole ark of clean and unclean creatures. Failing in this *coup*



*d'essai*, she would not simply disappoint many a beating heart in the glittering crowd that on different motives yearned for her success, but she would ruin herself — and, as the oracle within had told her, would, by ruining herself, ruin France. Our own sovereign lady Victoria rehearses annually a trial not so severe in degree, but the same in kind. She “pricks” for sheriffs. Joanna pricked for a king. But observe the difference: our own Lady pricks for two men out of three; Joanna for one man out of three hundred. Happy Lady of the islands and the orient! — she *can* go astray in her choice only by one half; to the extent of one half she *must* have the satisfaction of being right. And yet, even with these tight limits to the misery of a boundless discretion, permit me, liege Lady, with all loyalty, to submit — that now and then you prick with your pin the wrong man. But the poor child from Domrémy, shrinking under the gaze of a dazzling court, — not *because* dazzling (for in visions she had seen those that were more so), but because some of them wore a scoffing smile on their features, — how should *she* throw her line into so deep a river to angle for a king, where many a gay creature was sporting that masqueraded as a king in dress? Nay, even more than any true king would have done: for, in Southey’s version of the story, the dauphin says, by way of trying the virgin’s magnetic sympathy with royalty, —

“On the throne,  
I the while mingling with the menial throng,  
Some courtier shall be seated.”

This usurper is even crowned: “The jewelled crown shines on a menial’s head.” But, really, that is “*un peu fort*”; and the mob of spectators might raise a scruple whether our friend the jackdaw upon the throne, and the dauphin himself, were not grazing the shins of treason. For the dauphin could not lend more than belonged to him. According to the popular notion, he had no crown for himself; consequently none to lend, on any pretence whatever, until the consecrated Maid should take him to Rheims. This was the *popular* notion in France. But, certainly, it was the dauphin’s interest to support the popular notion, as he meant to use the services of Joanna. For, if he were king already, what was it that she could do for him beyond Orleans? That is to say, what more than a mere *military* service could she render him? And, above all, if he were king without a coronation, and without the oil from the sacred ampulla, what advantage was yet

open to him by celerity above his competitor the English boy? Now was to be a race for a coronation, — he that should win *that* race, carried the superstition of France along with him; he that should first be drawn from the ovens of Rheims was under that superstition baked into a king.

La Pucelle, before she could be allowed to practise as a warrior, was put through her manual and platoon exercise, as a pupil in divinity, at the bar of six eminent men in wigs. According to Southey (v. 393, Book III, in the original edition of his *Joan of Arc*), she “appalled the doctors.” It’s not easy to do *that*; but they had some reason to feel bothered, as that surgeon would assuredly feel bothered, who, upon proceeding to dissect a subject, should find the subject retaliating as a dissector upon himself, especially if Joanna ever made the speech to them which occupies v. 354–391, Book III. It is a double impossibility: 1st, because a piracy from Tindal’s *Christianity as Old as the Creation* — a piracy *a parte ante*, and by three centuries; 2dly, it is quite contrary to the evidence on Joanna’s trial. Southey’s *Joan*, of A. D. 1796 (Cottle, Bristol), tells the doctors, amongst other secrets, that she never in her life attended — 1st, Mass; nor 2d, the Sacramental table; nor 3d, Confession. In the meantime, all this deistical confession of Joanna’s, besides being suicidal for the interest of her cause, is opposed to the depositions upon *both* trials. The very best witness called from first to last deposes that Joanna attended these rites of her church even too often; was taxed with doing so; and, by blushing, owned the charge as a fact, though certainly not as a fault. Joanna was a girl of natural piety, that saw God in forests, and hills, and fountains; but did not the less seek him in chapels and consecrated oratories.

This peasant girl was self-educated through her own natural meditateness. If the reader turns to that divine passage in *Paradise Regained*, which Milton has put into the mouth of our Saviour when first entering the wilderness, and musing upon the tendency of those great impulses growing within himself, —

“Oh, what a multitude of thoughts at once  
Awaken’d in me swarm, while I consider  
What from within I feel myself, and hear  
What from without comes often to my ears,  
Ill sorting with my present state compared!



When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do  
What might be public good; myself I thought  
Born to that end," —

he will have some notion of the vast reveries which brooded over the heart of Joanna in early girlhood, when the wings were budding that should carry her from Orleans to Rheims; when the golden chariot was dimly revealing itself, that should carry her from the kingdom of *France Delivered* to the eternal kingdom.

It is not requisite for the honor of Joanna, nor is there, in this place, room to pursue her brief career of *action*. That, though wonderful, forms the earthly part of her story, — the spiritual part is the saintly passion of her imprisonment, trial, and execution. It is unfortunate, therefore, for Southey's *Joan of Arc* (which, however, should always be regarded as a *juvenile* effort), that, precisely when her real glory begins, the poem ends. But this limitation of the interest grew, no doubt, from the constraint inseparably attached to the law of epic unity. Joanna's history bisects into two opposite hemispheres, and both could not have been presented to the eye in one poem, unless by sacrificing all unity of theme, or else by involving the earlier half, as a narrative episode, in the latter; which, however, might have been done, for it might have been communicated to a fellow-prisoner or a confessor by Joanna herself. It is sufficient, as concerns *this* section of Joanna's life, to say that she fulfilled, to the height of her promises, the restoration of the prostrate throne. France had become a province of England; and for the ruin of both, if such a yoke could be maintained. Dreadful pecuniary exhaustion caused the English energy to droop; and that critical opening *La Pucelle* used with a corresponding felicity of audacity and suddenness (that were in themselves portentous) for introducing the wedge of French native resources, for rekindling the national pride, and for planting the dauphin once more upon his feet. When Joanna appeared, he had been on the point of giving up the struggle with the English, distressed as they were, and of flying to the south of France. She taught him to blush for such abject counsels. She liberated Orleans, that great city, so decisive by its fate for the issue of the war, and then beleaguered by the English with an elaborate application of engi-

neering skill unprecedented in Europe. Entering the city after sunset on the 29th of April, she sang mass on Sunday, May 8, for the entire disappearance of the besieging force. On the 29th of June, she fought and gained over the English the decisive battle of Patay; on the 9th of July, she took Troyes by a *coup-de-main* from a mixed garrison of English and Burgundians; on the 15th of that month, she carried the dauphin into Rheims; on Sunday, the 17th, she crowned him; and there she rested from her labor of triumph. All that was to be *done*, she had now accomplished: what remained was — to *suffer*.

All this forward movement was her own: excepting one man, the whole council was against her. Her enemies were all that drew power from earth. Her supporters were her own strong enthusiasm, and the headlong contagion by which she carried this sublime frenzy into the hearts of women, of soldiers, and of all who lived by labor. Henceforward she was thwarted; and the worst error that she committed was to lend the sanction of her presence to counsels which she had ceased to approve. But she had now accomplished the capital objects which her own visions had dictated. These involved all the rest. Errors were now less important; and doubtless it had now become more difficult for herself to pronounce authentically what *were* errors. The noble girl had achieved, as by a rapture of motion, the capital end of clearing out a free space around her sovereign, giving him the power to move his arms with effect; and, secondly, the inappreciable end of winning for that sovereign what seemed to all France the heavenly ratification of his rights, by crowning him with the ancient solemnities. She had made it impossible for the English now to step before her. They were caught in an irretrievable blunder, owing partly to discord amongst the uncles of Henry VI, partly to a want of funds, but partly to the very impossibility which they believed to press with tenfold force upon any French attempt to forestall theirs. They laughed at such a thought; and whilst they laughed, she *did* it. Henceforth the single redress for the English of this capital oversight, but which never *could* have redressed it effectually, was, to vitiate and taint the coronation of Charles VII as the work of a witch. That policy, and not malice (as M. Michelet is so happy to believe), was the moving principle in the subsequent prosecution of Joanna. Unless they unhinged the force of the first

coronation in the popular mind, by associating it with power given from hell, they felt that the sceptre of the invader was broken.

But she, the child that, at nineteen, had wrought wonders so great for France, was she not elated? Did she not lose, as men so often *have* lost, all sobriety of mind when standing upon the pinnacle of success so giddy? Let her enemies declare. During the progress of her movement, and in the centre of ferocious struggles, she had manifested the temper of her feelings by the pity which she had everywhere expressed for the suffering enemy. She forwarded to the English leaders a touching invitation to unite with the French, as brothers, in a common crusade against infidels, thus opening the road for a soldierly retreat. She interposed to protect the captive or the wounded — she mourned over the excesses of her countrymen — she threw herself off her horse to kneel by the dying English soldier, and to comfort him with such ministrations, physical or spiritual, as his situation allowed. “*Nolebat*,” says the evidence, “*uti ense suo, aut quemquam interficere*.” She sheltered the English that invoked her aid in her own quarters. She wept as she beheld, stretched on the field of battle, so many brave enemies that had died without confession. And, as regarded herself, her elation expressed itself thus:—On the day when she had finished her work, she wept; for she knew that, when her *triumphal* task was done, her end must be approaching. Her aspirations pointed only to a place which seemed to her more than usually full of natural piety as one in which it would give her pleasure to die. And she uttered, between smiles and tears, as a wish that inexpressibly fascinated her heart, and yet was half fantastic, a broken prayer that God would return her to the solitudes from which he had drawn her, and suffer her to become a shepherdess once more. It was a natural prayer, because nature has laid a necessity upon every human heart to seek for rest, and to shrink from torment. Yet, again, it was a half-fantastic prayer, because, from childhood upwards, visions that she had no power to mistrust, and the voices which sounded in her ear forever, had long since persuaded her mind that for *her* no such prayer could be granted. Too well she felt that her mission must be worked out to the end, and that the end was now at hand. All went wrong from this time. She herself had created the *funds* out of which the French restoration should grow; but she was not suffered to witness their development, or their prosperous application.

More than one military plan was entered upon which she did not approve. But she still continued to expose her person as before. Severe wounds had not taught her caution. And at length, in a sortie from Compiègne (whether through treacherous collusion on the part of her own friends is doubtful to this day), she was made prisoner by the Burgundians, and finally surrendered to the English.

7 Now came her trial. This trial, moving of course under English influence, was conducted in chief by the Bishop of Beauvais. He was a Frenchman, sold to English interests, and hoping, by favor of the English leaders, to reach the highest preferment. *Bishop that art, Archbishop that shalt be, Cardinal that mayest be*, were the words that sounded continually in his ear; and doubtless, a whisper of visions still higher, of a triple crown, and feet upon the necks of kings, sometimes stole into his heart. M. Michelet is anxious to keep us in mind that this bishop was but an agent of the English. True. But it does not better the case for his countryman — that, being an accomplice in the crime, making himself the leader in the persecution against the helpless girl, he was willing to be all this in the spirit, and with the conscious vileness of a cat's paw. Never from the foundations of the earth was there such a trial as this, if it were laid open in all its beauty of defence, and all its hellishness of attack. Oh, child of France! shepherdess, peasant girl! trodden under foot by all around thee, how I honor thy flashing intellect, quick as God's lightning, and true as God's lightning to its mark, that ran before France and laggard Europe by many a century, confounding the malice of the ensnarer, and making dumb the oracles of falsehood! Is it not scandalous, is it not humiliating to civilization, that, even at this day, France exhibits the horrid spectacle of judges examining the prisoner against himself; seducing him, by fraud, into treacherous conclusions against his own head; using the terrors of their power for extorting confessions from the frailty of hope; nay (which is worse) using the blandishments of condescension and snaky kindness for thawing into compliances of gratitude those whom they had failed to freeze into terror? Wicked judges! Barbarian jurisprudence! that, sitting in your own conceit on the summits of social wisdom, have yet failed to learn the first principles of criminal justice; sit ye humbly and with docility at the feet of this girl from Domrémy, that tore your webs of cruelty into shreds and dust.

“ Would you examine me as a witness against myself ? ” was the question by which many times she defied their arts. Continually she showed that their interrogations were irrelevant to any business before the court, or that entered into the ridiculous charges against her. General questions were proposed to her on points of casuistical divinity ; two-edged questions, which not one of themselves could have answered without, on the one side, landing himself in heresy (as then interpreted), or, on the other, in some presumptuous expression of self-esteem. Next came a wretched Dominican, that pressed her with an objection, which, if applied to the Bible, would tax every one of its miracles with unsoundness. The monk had the excuse of never having read the Bible. M. Michelet has no such excuse ; and it makes one blush for him, as a philosopher, to find him describing such an argument as “ weighty,” whereas it is but a varied expression of rude Mahometan metaphysics. Her answer to this, if there were room to place the whole in a clear light, was as shattering as it was rapid. Another thought to entrap her by asking what language the angelic visitors of her solitude had talked ; as though heavenly counsels could want polyglot interpreters for every word, or that God needed language at all in whispering thoughts to a human heart. Then came a worse devil, who asked her whether the archangel Michael had appeared naked. Not comprehending the vile insinuation, Joanna, whose poverty suggested to her simplicity that it might be the *costliness* of suitable robes which caused the demur, asked them if they fancied God, who clothed the flowers of the valleys, unable to find raiment for his servants. The answer of Joanna moves a smile of tenderness, but the disappointment of her judges makes one laugh exultingly. Others succeeded by troops, who upbraided her with leaving her father ; as if that greater Father, whom she believed herself to have been serving, did not retain the power of dispensing with his own rules, or had not said, that, for a less cause than martyrdom, man and woman should leave both father and mother.

On Easter Sunday, when the trial had been long proceeding, the poor girl fell so ill as to cause a belief that she had been poisoned. It was not poison. Nobody had any interest in hastening a death so certain. M. Michelet, whose sympathies with all feelings are so quick that one would gladly see them always as justly directed, reads the case most truly. Joanna had a two-



fold malady. She was visited by a paroxysm of the complaint called *homesickness*; the cruel nature of her imprisonment, and its length, could not but point her solitary thoughts, in darkness and in chains (for chained she was), to Domrémy. And the season, which was the most heavenly period of the spring, added stings to this yearning. That was one of her maladies — *nostalgia*, as medicine calls it; the other was weariness and exhaustion from daily combats with malice. She saw that everybody hated her, and thirsted for her blood; nay, many kind-hearted creatures that would have pitied her profoundly, as regarded all political charges, had their natural feelings warped by the belief that she had dealings with fiendish powers. She knew she was to die; that was *not* the misery: the misery was that this consummation could not be reached without so much intermediate strife, as if she were contending for some chance (where chance was none) of happiness, or were dreaming for a moment of escaping the inevitable. Why, then, *did* she contend? Knowing that she would reap nothing from answering her persecutors, why did she not retire by silence from the superfluous contest? It was because her quick and eager loyalty to truth would not suffer her to see it darkened by frauds, which *she* could expose, but others, even of candid listeners, perhaps could not; it was through that imperishable grandeur of soul, which taught her to submit meekly and without a struggle to her punishment, but taught her *not* to submit — no, not for a moment — to calumny as to facts, or to misconstruction as to motives. Besides, there were secretaries all around the court taking down her words. That was meant for no good to *her*. But the end does not always correspond to the meaning. And Joanna might say to herself, "These words that will be used against me to-morrow and the next day perhaps in some nobler generation may rise again for my justification." Yes, Joanna, they *are* rising even now in Paris, and for more than justification.

Woman, sister — there are some things which you do not execute as well as your brother, man; no, nor ever will. Pardon me, if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great poet from your choirs, or a Mozart, or a Phidias, or a Michael Angelo, or a great philosopher, or a great scholar. By which last is meant, not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the

resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life. If you *can* create yourselves into any of these great creators, why have you not?

Yet, sister woman, though I cannot consent to find a Mozart or a Michael Angelo in your sex, cheerfully, and with the love that burns in the depths of admiration, I acknowledge that you can do one thing as well as the best of us men, a greater thing than even Milton is known to have done, or Michael Angelo, — you can die grandly, and as goddesses would die, were goddesses mortal. If any distant worlds (which *may* be the case) are so far ahead of us Tellurians in optical resources, as to see distinctly through their telescopes all that we do on earth, what is the grandest sight to which we ever treat them? St. Peter's at Rome, do you fancy, on Easter Sunday, or Luxor, or perhaps the Himalayas? Oh, no! my friend, suggest something better; these are baubles to *them*; they see in other worlds, in their own, far better toys of the same kind. These, take my word for it, are nothing. Do you give it up? The finest thing, then, we have to show them, is a scaffold on the morning of execution. I assure you there is a strong muster in those far telescopic worlds, on any such morning, of those who happen to find themselves occupying the right hemisphere for a peep at *us*. How, then, if it be announced in some such telescopic world by those who make a livelihood of catching glimpses at our newspapers, whose language they have long since deciphered, that the poor victim in the morning's sacrifice is a woman? How, if it be published in that distant world, that the sufferer wears upon her head, in the eyes of many, the garlands of martyrdom? How, if it should be some Marie Antoinette, the widowed queen, coming forward on the scaffold, and presenting to the morning air her head turned gray by sorrow, daughter of Cæsars kneeling down humbly to kiss the guillotine, as one that worships death? How, if it were the noble Charlotte Corday, that in the bloom of youth, that with the loveliest of persons, that with homage waiting upon her smiles wherever she turned her face to scatter them, — homage that followed those smiles as surely as the carols of birds, after showers in spring, follow the reappearing sun, and the racing of sunbeams over the hills, — yet thought all these things cheaper than the dust upon her sandals, in comparison of deliverance from hell for her dear suffering France! Ah! these were spec-



tacles indeed for those sympathizing people in distant worlds ; and some, perhaps, would suffer a sort of martyrdom themselves, because they could not testify their wrath, could not bear witness to the strength of love and to the fury of hatred that burned within them at such scenes, could not gather into golden urns some of that glorious dust which rested in the catacombs of earth.

On the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday in 1431, being then about nineteen years of age, the Maid of Arc underwent her martyrdom. She was conducted before mid-day, guarded by eight hundred spearmen, to a platform of prodigious height, constructed of wooden billets supported by occasional walls of lath and plaster, and traversed by hollow spaces in every direction for the creation of air-currents. The pile "struck terror," says M. Michelet, "by its height ;" and, as usual, the English purpose in this is viewed as one of pure malignity. But there are two ways of explaining all that. It is probable that the purpose was merciful. On the circumstances of the execution I shall not linger. Yet, to mark the almost fatal felicity of M. Michelet in finding out whatever may injure the English name, at a moment when every reader will be interested in Joanna's personal appearance, it is really edifying to notice the ingenuity by which he draws into light from a dark corner a very unjust account of it, and neglects, though lying upon the high road, a very pleasing one. Both are from English pens. Grafton, a chronicler but little read, being a stiff-necked John Bull, thought fit to say that no wonder Joanna should be a virgin, since her "foule face" was a satisfactory solution of that particular merit. Holinshed, on the other hand, a chronicler somewhat later, every way more important, and at one time universally read, has given a very pleasing testimony to the interesting character of Joanna's person and engaging manners. Neither of these men lived till the following century, so that personally this evidence is none at all. Grafton sullenly and carelessly believed as he wished to believe ; Holinshed took pains to inquire, and reports undoubtedly the general impression of France. But I cite the case as illustrating M. Michelet's candor.

The circumstantial incidents of the execution, unless with more space than I can now command, I should be unwilling to relate. I should fear to injure, by imperfect report, a martyrdom which to myself appears so unspeakably grand. Yet for a

purpose, pointing not at Joanna, but at M. Michelet — viz., to convince him that an Englishman is capable of thinking more highly of *La Pucelle* than even her admiring countryman — I shall, in parting, allude to one or two traits in Joanna's demeanor on the scaffold, and to one or two in that of the bystanders, which authorize me in questioning an opinion of his upon this martyr's firmness. The reader ought to be reminded that Joanna D'Arc was subjected to an unusually unfair trial of opinion. Any of the elder Christian martyrs had not much to fear of *personal* rancor. The martyr was chiefly regarded as the enemy of Cæsar; at times also, where any knowledge of the Christian faith and morals existed, with the enmity that arises spontaneously in the worldly against the spiritual. But the martyr, though disloyal, was not supposed to be, therefore, anti-national; and still less was *individually* hateful. What was hated (if anything) belonged to his class, not to himself separately. Now, Joanna, if hated at all, was hated personally, and in Rouen on national grounds. Hence there would be a certainty of calumny arising against *her*, such as would not affect martyrs in general. That being the case, it would follow of necessity that some people would impute to her a willingness to recant. No innocence could escape *that*. Now, had she really testified this willingness on the scaffold, it would have argued nothing at all but the weakness of a genial nature shrinking from the instant approach of torment. And those will often pity that weakness most, who, in their own persons, would yield to it least. Meantime, there never was a calumny uttered that drew less support from the recorded circumstances. It rests upon no *positive* testimony, and it has a weight of contradicting testimony to stem. And yet, strange to say, M. Michelet, who at times seems to admire the Maid of Arc as much as I do, is the one sole writer amongst her *friends* who lends some countenance to this odious slander. His words are, that, if she did not utter this word *recant* with her lips, she uttered it in her heart. "Whether she *said* the word is uncertain; but I affirm that she *thought* it."

Now, I affirm that she did not; not in any sense of the word "thought" applicable to the case. Here is France calumniating *La Pucelle*; here is England defending her. M. Michelet can only mean that, on *a priori* principles, every woman must be liable to such a weakness; that Joanna was a woman; *ergo*,

that she was liable to such a weakness. That is, he only supposes her to have uttered the word by an argument which presumes it impossible for anybody to have done otherwise. I, on the contrary, throw the *onus* of the argument not on presumable tendencies of nature, but on the known facts of that morning's execution, as recorded by multitudes. What else, I demand, than mere weight of metal, absolute nobility of deportment, broke the vast line of battle then arrayed against her? What else but her meek, saintly demeanor won from the enemies, that till now had believed her a witch, tears of rapturous admiration? "Ten thousand men," says M. Michelet himself, "ten thousand men wept;" and of these ten thousand the majority were political enemies knitted together by cords of superstition. What else was it but her constancy, united with her angelic gentleness, that drove the fanatic English soldier—who had sworn to throw a faggot on her scaffold, as *his* tribute of abhorrence, that *did* so, that fulfilled his vow—suddenly to turn away a penitent for life, saying everywhere that he had seen a dove rising upon wings to heaven from the ashes where she had stood? What else drove the executioner to kneel at every shrine for pardon to *his* share in the tragedy! And if all this were insufficient, then I cite the closing act of her life as valid on her behalf, were all other testimonies against her. The executioner had been directed to apply his torch from below. He did so. The fiery smoke rose upwards in billowing volumes. A Dominican monk was then standing almost at her side. Wrapped up in his sublime office, he saw not the danger, but still persisted in his prayers. Even then, when the last enemy was racing up the fiery stairs to seize her, even at that moment did this noblest of girls think only for *him*, the one friend that would not forsake her, and not for herself; bidding him with her last breath to care for his own preservation, but to leave *her* to God. That girl, whose latest breath ascended in this sublime expression of self-oblivion, did not utter the word *recant* either with her lips or in her heart. No; she did not, though one should rise from the dead to swear it.

. . . . .

Bishop of Beauvais! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold—thou upon a down bed. But for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles,

oftentimes the tortured and torturer have the same truce from carnal torment; both sink together into sleep; together both, sometimes, kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, bishop and shepherd girl — when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you — let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

The shepherd girl that had delivered France — she, from her dungeon, she, from her baiting at the stake, she, from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream — saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival, which man had denied to her languishing heart — that resurrection of springtime, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from *her*, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests — were by God given back into her hands, as jewels that had been stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages), was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege, for *her* might be created, in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. The mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered, the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood that she was to reckon for had been exacted; the tears that she was to shed in secret had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold she had triumphed gloriously; victoriously she had tasted the stings of death. For all, except this comfort from her farewell dream, she had died — died, amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies — died, amidst the drums and trumpets of armies — died, amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror — rising (like the mocking mirrors of *mirage* in Arabian deserts) from the fens of death — most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins; therefore I know, bishop, that you also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself to your eyes in pure

morning dews; but neither dews, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her face. But as *you* draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but *you* know them, bishop, well! Oh, mercy! what a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his laboring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off! Yet not *so* to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find a respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In glades, where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling; towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. There is the great English Prince, Regent of France. There is my Lord of Winchester, the princely cardinal, that died and made no sign. There is the Bishop of Beauvais, clinging to the shelter of thickets. What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Will they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No: it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit again upon the judgment-seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah! no: he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting: the mighty audience is gathered, the Court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are arrayed, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is taking his place. Oh! but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? "Counsel I have none: in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me*: all are silent." Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas, the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity, but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief: I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you: yes, bishop, *SHE* — when heaven and earth are silent.



# THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

## SECTION THE FIRST—THE GLORY OF MOTION

SOME twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer, at that time M. P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets, — he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or which is the same thing, discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did not marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organized by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams, — an agency which they accomplished, first, through velocity, at that time unprecedented — for they first revealed the glory of motion; secondly, through grand effects for the eye between lamplight and the darkness upon solitary roads; thirdly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; fourthly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that — in the midst of vast distances, of storms, of darkness, of danger — overruled all obstacles into one steady coöperation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme baton of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organization. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannizes over my dreams by terror and

terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo. These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

The mail-coach, as the national organ for publishing these mighty events thus diffusively influential, became itself a spiritualized and glorified object to an impassioned heart; and naturally, in the Oxford of that day, *all* hearts were impassioned, as being all (or nearly all) in *early* manhood. In most universities there is one single college; in Oxford there were five-and-twenty, all of which were peopled by young men, the *élite* of their own generation, — not boys, but men; none under eighteen. In some of these many colleges, the custom permitted the student to keep what are called “short terms;” that is, the four terms of Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act, were kept by a residence, in the aggregate of ninety-one days, or thirteen weeks. Under this interrupted residence, it was possible that a student might have a reason for going down to his home four times in the year. This made eight journeys to and fro. But, as the homes lay dispersed through all the shires of the island, and most of us disdained all coaches except his majesty’s mail, no city out of London could pretend to so extensive a connection with Mr. Palmer’s establishment as Oxford. Three mails, at the least, I remember as passing every day through Oxford, and benefiting by my personal patronage, — viz., the Worcester, the Gloucester, and the Holyhead mail. Naturally, therefore, it became a point of some interest with us, whose journeys re-



volved every six weeks on an average, to look a little into the executive details of the system. With some of these Mr. Palmer had no concern; they rested upon by-laws enacted by posting-houses for their own benefit, and upon other by-laws, equally stern, enacted by the inside passengers for the illustration of their own haughty exclusiveness. These last were of a nature to rouse our scorn, from which the transition was not very long to systematic mutiny. Up to this time, say 1804 or 1805 (the year of Trafalgar), it had been the fixed assumption of the four inside people (as an old tradition of all public carriages derived from the reign of Charles II), that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delf-ware outsiders. Even to have kicked an outsider, might have been held to attain the foot concerned in that operation; so that, perhaps, it would have required an act of Parliament to restore its purity of blood. What words, then, could express the horror, and the sense of treason, in that case, which *had* happened, where all three outsiders (the trinity of Pariahs) made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table or dinner-table with the consecrated four? I myself witnessed such an attempt; and on that occasion a benevolent old gentleman endeavored to soothe his three holy associates, by suggesting that, if the outsiders were indicted for this criminal attempt at the next assizes, the court would regard it as a case of lunacy, or *delirium tremens*, rather than of treason. England owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy. I am not the man to laugh at it. But sometimes, undoubtedly, it expressed itself in comic shapes. The course taken with the infatuated outsiders, in the particular attempt which I have noticed, was, that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle-à-manger*, sang out, "This way, my good men," and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen. But that plan had not always answered. Sometimes, though rarely, cases occurred where the intruders, being stronger than usual, or more vicious than usual, resolutely refused to budge, and so far carried their point as to have a separate table arranged for themselves in a corner of the general room. Yet, if an Indian screen could be found ample enough to plant them out from the very eyes of the high table,

or *dais*, it then became possible to assume as a fiction of law — that the three delf fellows, after all, were not present. They could be ignored by the porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.

Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters — were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, generally, from the suspicion of being “*raff*” (the name at that period for “*snobs*”), we really *were* such constructively, by the place we assumed. If we did not submit to the deep shadow of eclipse, we entered at least the skirts of its penumbra. And the analogy of theatres was valid against us, where no man can complain of the annoyances incident to the pit or gallery, having his instant remedy in paying the higher price of the boxes. But the soundness of this analogy we disputed. In the case of the theatre, it cannot be pretended that the inferior situations have any separate attractions, unless the pit may be supposed to have an advantage for the purposes of the critic or the dramatic reporter. But the critic or reporter is a rarity. For most people, the sole benefit is in the price. Now, on the contrary, the outside of the mail had its own incommunicable advantages. These we could not forego. The higher price we would willingly have paid, but not the price connected with the condition of riding inside; which condition we pronounced insufferable. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat — these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

Such was the difficulty which pressed us; and under the coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles; and it was ascertained satisfactorily that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been

traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar in disguise.

Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the Celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III; but the exact mode of using it was an immense mystery to Pekin. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made some imperfect explanations upon this point; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper at the very moment of his departure, the Celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it became necessary to call a cabinet council on the grand state question, "Where was the emperor to sit?" The hammer-cloth happened to be unusually gorgeous; and partly on that consideration, but partly also because the box offered the most elevated seat, was nearest to the moon, and undeniably went foremost, it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch. The horses, therefore, being harnessed, solemnly his imperial majesty ascended his new English throne under a flourish of trumpets, having the first lord of the treasury on his right hand, and the chief jester on his left. Pekin gloried in the spectacle; and in the whole flowery people, constructively present by representation, there was but one discontented person, and *that* was the coachman. This mutinous individual audaciously shouted, "Where am *I* to sit?" But the privy council, incensed by his disloyalty, unanimously opened the door, and kicked him into the inside. He had all the inside places to himself; but such is the rapacity of ambition, that he was still dissatisfied. "I say," he cried out in an extempore petition, addressed to the emperor through the window, — "I say, how am I to catch hold of the reins?" — "Anyhow," was the imperial answer; "don't trouble *me*, man, in my glory. How catch the reins? Why, through the windows, through the keyholes — *anyhow*." Finally this contumacious coachman lengthened the check-strings into a sort of jury-reins, communicating with the horses; with these he drove as steadily as Pekin had any right to expect. The emperor returned after the briefest of circuits; he descended in great pomp from his throne with the severest resolution never to remount it. A

public thanksgiving was ordered for his majesty's happy escape from the disease of broken neck; and the state-coach was dedicated thenceforward as a votive offering to the god Fo, Fo — whom the learned more accurately called Fi, Fi.

A revolution of this same Chinese character did young Oxford of that era effect in the constitution of mail-coach society. It was a perfect French revolution; and we had good reason to say, *ça ira*. In fact, it soon became *too* popular. The "public," — a well-known character, particularly disagreeable, though slightly respectable, and notorious for affecting the chief seats in synagogues, — had at first loudly opposed this revolution; but when the opposition showed itself to be ineffectual, our disagreeable friend went into it with headlong zeal. At first it was a sort of race between us; and, as the public is usually from thirty to fifty years old, naturally we of young Oxford, that averaged about twenty, had the advantage. Then the public took to bribing, giving fees to horse-keepers, &c., who hired out their persons as warming-pans on the box-seat. *That*, you know, was shocking to all moral sensibilities. Come to bribery, said we, and there is an end to all morality, Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's, or anybody's. And, besides, of what use was it? For *we* bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to sixpence, here again young Oxford had the advantage. But the contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, rebribed, and often sur-rebribed; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election; and a horse-keeper, hostler, or helper was held by the philosophical at that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, allocating to a particular moon now approaching some unknown danger, and he should inquire earnestly, "Whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of His Majesty's mail. Nobody can touch

you there. If it is by bills at ninety days after date that you are made unhappy — if noters and protesters are the sort of wretches whose astrological shadows darken the house of life — then note you what I vehemently protest ; viz., that no matter though the sheriff and under-sheriff in every county should be running after you with his *posse*, touch a hair of your head he cannot whilst you keep house, and have your legal domicile on the box of the mail. It is felony to stop the mail ; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances — to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunderbuss. Rats again! — there *are* none about mail-coaches any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland ; except, indeed, now and then a parliamentary rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the "coal-cellar." And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of the law and the lawgiver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat in the rear of the roof, from which he could exchange his own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches ; it was treason, it was *læsa majestas*, it was by tendency arson ; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of letters. Yet even this left the sanctity of the box unviolated. In dignified repose, the coachman and myself sat on, resting with benign composure upon our knowledge that the fire would have to burn its way through four inside passengers before it could reach ourselves. I remarked to the coachman, with a quotation from Virgil's *Æneid* really too hackneyed : —

"Jam proximus ardet  
Ucalegon."

But, recollecting that the Virgilian part of the coachman's education might have been neglected, I interpreted so far as to say, that perhaps at that moment the flames were catching hold of



our worthy brother and inside passenger, Ucalegon. The coachman made no answer, which is my own way when a stranger addresses me either in Syriac or in Coptic, but by his faint sceptical smile he seemed to insinuate that he knew better; for that Ucalegon, as it happened, was not in the way-bill and therefore could not have been booked.

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government — a connection obvious, but yet not strictly defined — gave to the whole mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah! traitors, they do not hear us as yet; but, as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings. Treason they feel to be their crime; each individual carter feels himself under the ban of confiscation and attainder; his blood is attainted through six generations; and nothing is wanting but the headsman and his axe, the block and the saw-dust, to close up the vista of his horrors. What! shall it be within benefit of clergy to delay the king's message on the high road? — to interrupt the great respirations, ebb and flood, *systole* and *diastole*, of the national intercourse? — to endanger the safety of tidings, running day and night between all nations and languages? Or can it be fancied, amongst the weakest of men, that the bodies of the criminals will be given up to their widows for Christian burial? Now the doubts which were raised as to our powers did more to wrap them in terror, by wrapping them in uncertainty, than could have been effected by the sharpest definitions of the law from the Quarter Sessions. We, on our parts (we, the collective mail, I mean), did our utmost to exalt the idea of our privileges by the insolence with which we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a

potential station ; and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

Sometimes after breakfast His Majesty's mail would become frisky ; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, &c. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavored in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail ; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow, saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes of Marengo), "Ah ! wherefore have we not time to weep over you ?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had no time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the Royal Mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence ? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road ? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *a fortiori* I upheld its rights ; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedency, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer," all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and color in this plebeian wretch ! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate color was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single panel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state ; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor. For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side — a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leav-



ing us behind. "Do you see *that*?" I said to the coachman. — "I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the King's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted." Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic, sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race? I said, with philosophic calmness, *No*; because we were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied that he did n't see *that*; for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. "*Race* us, if you like," I replied, "though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason; and for its own sake I am glad that the 'Tallyho' was disappointed." So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists; viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom, when the Sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs, were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle; and in defiance of the eagle's natural advantages, in contempt also of the eagle's traditional royalty, and before the whole assembled field of astonished spectators from Agra and Lahore, killed the eagle on the spot. Amazement seized the Sultan at the unequal contest, and burning admiration for its unparalleled result. He commanded

that the hawk should be brought before him ; he caressed the bird with enthusiasm ; and he ordered that, for the commemoration of his matchless courage, a diadem of gold and rubies should be solemnly placed on the hawk's head ; but then that, immediately after this solemn coronation, the bird should be led off to execution, as the most valiant indeed of traitors, but not the less a traitor, as having dared to rise rebelliously against his liege lord and anointed sovereign, the eagle. "Now," said I to the Welshman, "to you and me, as men of refined sensibilities, how painful it would have been that this poor Brummagem brute, the 'Tallyho,' in the impossible case of a victory over us, should have been crowned with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman pearls, and then led off to instant execution." The Welshman doubted if that could be warranted by law. And when I hinted at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18, for regulating the precedency of coaches, as being probably the statute relied on for the capital punishment of such offences, he replied dryly, that if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the "Tallyho" appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law.

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence ; as, for instance, because somebody *says* that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I, myself, am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*, as upon railways, *sed vivimus*. Yes, "*magna vivimus*;" we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realize our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubts impossible on the question of our speed ; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling ; and this speed was not the product of blind, insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The

sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings — kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up forever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way forever to the pot-walloping of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

How else, for example, than as a constant watcher for the dawn, and for the London mail that in summer months entered about daybreak amongst the lawny thickets of Marlborough forest, couldst thou, sweet Fanny of the Bath Road, have become the glorified inmate of my dreams? Yet Fanny, as the loveliest young woman for face and person that perhaps in my whole life I have beheld, merited the station which even now, from a distance of forty years, she holds in my dreams; yes, though by links of natural association she brings along with

her a troop of dreadful creatures, fabulous and not fabulous, that are more abominable to the heart than Fanny and the dawn are delightful.

Miss Fanny of the Bath Road, strictly speaking, lived at a mile's distance from the road; but came so continually to meet the mail that I on my frequent transits rarely missed her, and naturally connected her image with the great thoroughfare where only I had ever seen her. Why she came so punctually, I do not exactly know; but I believe with some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered at her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them. The mail-coachman who drove the Bath Mail, and wore the Royal livery, happened to be Fanny's grandfather. A good man he was, that loved his beautiful granddaughter; and, loving her wisely, was vigilant over her deportment in any case where young Oxford might happen to be concerned. Did my vanity then suggest that I myself, individually, could fall within the line of his terrors? Certainly not, as regarded any physical pretensions that I could plead; for Fanny (as a chance passenger from her own neighborhood once told me) counted in her train a hundred and ninety-nine professed admirers, if not open aspirants to her favor; and probably not one of the whole brigade but excelled myself in personal advantages. Ulysses even, with the unfair advantage of his accursed bow, could hardly have undertaken that amount of suitors. So the danger might have seemed slight—only that woman is universally aristocratic; it is amongst her nobilities of heart that she *is* so. Now, the aristocratic distinctions in my favor might easily with Miss Fanny have compensated my physical deficiencies. Did I then make love to Fanny? Why, yes; about as much love as one *could* make whilst the mail was changing horses—a process which, ten years later, did not occupy above eighty seconds; but *then*—viz., about Waterloo—it occupied five times eighty. Now, four hundred seconds offer a field quite ample enough for whispering into a young woman's ear a great deal of truth, and (by way of parenthesis) some trifle of falsehood. Grandpapa did right, therefore, to watch me. And yet, as happens too often to the grandpapas of earth in a contest with the admirers of granddaughters, how vainly would he have watched me had I meditated any evil whispers to Fanny! She, it is my belief, would have protected herself against any

man's evil suggestions. But he, as the result showed, could not have intercepted the opportunities for such suggestions. Yet, why not? Was he not active? Was he not blooming? Blooming he was as Fanny herself.

"Say, all our praises why should lords —"

Stop, that's not the line.

"Say, all our roses why should girls engross?"

The coachman showed rosy blossoms on his face deeper than even his granddaughter's — *his* being drawn from the ale cask, Fanny's from the fountains of the dawn. But, in spite of his blooming face, some infirmities he had; and one particularly in which he too much resembled a crocodile. This lay in a monstrous inaptitude for turning round. The crocodile, I presume, owes that inaptitude to the absurd *length* of his back; but in our grandpapa it arose rather from the absurd *breadth* of his back, combined, possibly, with some growing stiffness in his legs. Now, upon this crocodile infirmity of his I planted a human advantage for tendering my homage to Miss Fanny. In defiance of all his honorable vigilance, no sooner had he presented to us his mighty Jovian back (what a field for displaying to mankind his royal scarlet!), whilst inspecting professionally the buckles, the straps, and the silvery turrets of his harness, than I raised Miss Fanny's hand to my lips, and, by the mixed tenderness and respectfulness of my manner, caused her easily to understand how happy it would make me to rank upon her list as No. 10 or 12, in which case a few casualties amongst her lovers (and observe, they *hanged* liberally in those days) might have promoted me speedily to the top of the tree; as, on the other hand, with how much loyalty of submission I acquiesced by anticipation in her award, supposing that she should plant me in the very rearward of her favor, as No. 199 + 1. Most truly I loved this beautiful and ingenuous girl; and had it not been for the Bath Mail, timing all courtships by post-office allowance, heaven only knows what might have come of it. People talk of being over head and ears in love; now, the mail was the cause that I sank only over ears in love, which, you know, still left a trifle of brain to overlook the whole conduct of the affair.

Ah, reader! when I look back upon those days, it seems to me that all things change — all things perish. "Perish the roses and the palms of kings;" perish even the crowns and



trophies of Waterloo; thunder and lightning are not the thunder and lightning which I remember. Roses are degenerating. The Fannies of our Island — though this I say with reluctance — are not visibly improving; and the Bath Road is notoriously superannuated. Crocodiles, you will say, are stationary. Mr. Waterton tells me that the crocodile does *not* change; that a cayman, in fact, or an alligator, is just as good for riding upon as he was in the time of the Pharaohs. *That* may be; but the reason is, that the crocodile does not live fast — he is a slow coach. I believe it is generally understood among naturalists that the crocodile is a blockhead. It is my own impression that the Pharaohs were also blockheads. Now, as the Pharaohs and the crocodile domineered over Egyptian society, this accounts for a singular mistake that prevailed through innumerable generations on the Nile. The crocodile made the ridiculous blunder of supposing man to be meant chiefly for his own eating. Man, taking a different view of the subject, naturally met that mistake by another: he viewed the crocodile as a thing sometimes to worship, but always to run away from. And this continued until Mr. Waterton changed the relations between the animals. The mode of escaping from the reptile he showed to be, not by running away, but by leaping on its back, booted and spurred. The two animals had misunderstood each other. The use of the crocodile has now been cleared up, — viz., to be ridden; and the final cause of man is that he may improve the health of the crocodile by riding him a-fox-hunting before breakfast. And it is pretty certain that any crocodile who has been regularly hunted through the season, and is master of the weight he carries, will take a six-barred gate now as well as ever he would have done in the infancy of the pyramids.

If, therefore, the crocodile does *not* change, all things else undeniably *do*: even the shadow of the pyramids grows less. And often the restoration in vision of Fanny and the Bath Road makes me too pathetically sensible of that truth. Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, uprises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in June; or, if I think for an instant of the rose in June, up rises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June, then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus — roses and Fannies, Fannies



and roses, without end, thick as blossoms in paradise. Then comes a venerable crocodile in a royal livery of scarlet and gold with sixteen capes; and the crocodile is driving four-in-hand from the box of the Bath Mail. And suddenly, we upon the mail are pulled up by a mighty dial, sculptured with the hours, that mingle with the heavens and the heavenly host. Then all at once we are arrived at Marlborough forest, amongst the lovely households of the roe-deer; the deer and their fawns retire into the dewy thickets; the thickets are rich with roses; once again the roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny; and she, being the granddaughter of a crocodile, awakens a dreadful host of semi-legendary animals — griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes — till at length the whole vision of fighting images crowds into one towering armorial shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities and human loveliness that have perished, but quartered heraldically with unutterable and demoniac natures; whilst over all rises, as a surmounting crest, one fair female hand, with the forefinger pointing, in sweet, sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven, where is sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children.

#### GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY

But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail-coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo: the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which, in such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position — partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more from its keeping alive through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having beaten them in pitched battles! Five years

of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any unauthorized rumor steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

From eight P. M. to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at that time, and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity — but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses — were what might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination — wheels, axles, linchpins, poles, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigor as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory; and, behold! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition! — horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially His Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries, of course; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear on this fine evening these liveries exposed to view without any covering of upper coats. \* Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such, except by dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to

the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood. The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years — Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen — expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses ! Can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards ? What stir ! — what sea-like ferment ! — what a thundering of wheels ! — what a trampling of hoofs ! — what a sounding of trumpets ! — what farewell cheers — what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail — “ Liverpool forever ! ” — with the name of the particular victory, — “ Badajoz forever ! ” or “ Salamanca forever ! ” The half-slumbering consciousness that all night long and all the next day — perhaps for even a longer period — many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gun-powder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred miles, northwards for six hundred ; and the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

Liberated from the embarrassments of the city, and issuing into the broad, uncrowded avenues of the northern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our natural pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every story

of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows — young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols — and rolling volleys of sympathizing cheers run along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness, real or assumed, — thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect, with bold exulting smiles, as we pass him. The victory has healed him, and says, Be thou whole! Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels; sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies — one likely to be “mamma,” and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beautiful unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes, in these ingenuous girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands, on first discovering our laurelled equipage! — by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them — and by the heightened color on their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, “See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory.” In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers — I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me — raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under the Crown, touches his hat. The ladies move to us, in return, with a winning graciousness of gesture; all smile on each side in a way that nobody could misunderstand, and that nothing short of a grand national sympathy could so instantaneously prompt. Will these ladies say that we are nothing to *them*? Oh, no; they will not say *that*. They cannot deny — they do not deny — that for this night they are our sisters; gentle or simple, scholar or illiterate servant, for twelve hours to come, we on the outside have the honor to be their brothers. Those poor women, again,

who stop to gaze upon us with delight at the entrance of Barnet, and seem, by their air of weariness, to be returning from labor — do you mean to say that they are washerwomen and charwomen? Oh, my poor friend, you are quite mistaken. I assure you they stand in a far higher rank; for this one night they feel themselves by birthright to be daughters of England, and answer to no humbler title.

Every joy, however, even rapturous joy — such is the sad law of earth — may carry with it grief, or fear of grief, to some. Three miles beyond Barnet, we see approaching us another private carriage, nearly repeating the circumstances of the former case. Here, also, the glasses are all down — here, also, is an elderly lady seated; but the two daughters are missing; for the single young person sitting by the lady's side, seems to be an attendant — so I judge from her dress, and her air of respectful reserve. The lady is in mourning; and her countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses' hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decorations explain the case to her at once; but she beholds them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark, when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a "Courier" evening paper, containing the gazette, for the next carriage that might pass. Accordingly he tossed it in, so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as GLORIOUS VICTORY might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything; and, if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror, it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself in a day or two to have suffered the heaviest afflictions by the battle, blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the news and its details as gave to her the appearance which



amongst Celtic Highlanders is called *fey*. This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people up out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels; whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness; these optical splendors, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we stayed for three or four minutes, I alighted; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself. The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion was the imperfect one of Talavera — imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish General, Cuesta, but not imperfect in its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle. The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Peninsular army. Oh, yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23d Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses — *over* a trench where they could; *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who did closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervor (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then he was calling to His presence), that two results followed. As regarded



the enemy, this 23d Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralyzed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23d were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated ; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment — a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the ear of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama — in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth ? Had I the heart to break up her dreams ? No. To-morrow, said I to myself — to-morrow, or the next day, will publish the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace ? After to-morrow the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's service and glory. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gayly as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to her), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England, as willingly — poured out their noble blood as cheerfully — as ever after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this knowledge that the 23d Dragoons had been memorably engaged ; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that *he*, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict — a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London — so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy, that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

## SECTION THE SECOND—THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

WHAT is to be taken as the predominant opinion of man, reflective and philosophic, upon SUDDEN DEATH? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, sudden death has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, or, again, as that consummation which is with most horror to be deprecated. Cæsar, the Dictator, at his last dinner party (*cæna*), on the very evening before his assassination, when the minutes of his earthly career were numbered, being asked what death, in *his* judgment, might be pronounced the most eligible, replied, "That which should be most sudden." On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors: "From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from SUDDEN DEATH — *Good Lord, deliver us.*" Sudden death is here made to crown the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is ranked among the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was ranked as the first of blessings. In that difference most readers will see little more than the essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. But this, on consideration, I doubt. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life — as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany, unless under a special construction of the word "sudden." It seems a petition indulged, rather, and conceded to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. It is not so much a doctrine built upon the eternities of the Christian system, as a plausible opinion built upon special varieties of physical temperament. Let that, however, be as it may, two

remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this; that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death, from the disposition to lay a false stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become *final* words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror; as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity surprising him has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one. Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance, — feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that, having known himself drawing near to the presence of God, should have suited his demeanor to an expectation so awful. But this is no part of the case supposed. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of special immorality, but simply of special misfortune.

The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word *sudden*. Very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but perhaps they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a violent death, a *βιαιάνατος* — death that is *βίαιος*, or, in other words, death that is brought about, not by internal and spontaneous change, but by active force, having its origin from without. In this meaning the two authorities agree. Thus far they are in harmony. But the difference is, that the Roman by the word “sudden” means *unlingering*; whereas the Christian Litany by “sudden death” means a death *without warning*, consequently without any available summons to religious preparation. The poor mutineer, who kneels down to gather into his

heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense, — one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly *not* one) groan, and all is over. But in the sense of the Litany, the mutineer's death is far from sudden; his offence originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate — having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

Here at once, in this sharp verbal distinction, we comprehend the faithful earnestness with which a holy Christian Church pleads on behalf of her poor departing children, that God would vouchsafe to them the last great privilege and distinction possible on a death-bed, viz., the opportunity of untroubled preparation for facing this mighty trial. Sudden death, as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable, proposes a question of choice which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered, according to each man's variety of temperament. Meantime, one aspect of sudden death there is, one modification, upon which no doubt can arise, that of all martyrdoms it is the most agitating; viz., where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurrying, flying, inappreciably minute chance of evading it. Sudden as the danger which it affronts must be any effort by which such an evasion can be accomplished. Even *that*, even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case; viz., where the appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but to the conscience, on behalf of some other life besides your own, accidentally thrown upon *your* protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial; though in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another, a fellow-creature shuddering between the gates of life and death, — this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. You are called upon, by the case supposed, possibly to die; but to die at the very moment when, by any even partial failure or effeminate collapse of your energies, you will be self-

denounced as a murderer. You had but the twinkling of an eye for your effort, and that effort might have been unavailing; but to have risen to the level of such an effort would have rescued you, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to your final and farewell duty.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer, lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, through languishing prostration in hope and the energies of hope, that constant sequel of lying down before the lion, publishes the secret frailty of human nature, reveals its deep-seated falsehood to itself, records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is presented for tempting him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; once again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls by his own choice; again, by infinite iteration, the ancient Earth groans to Heaven, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works," again "gives signs of woe that all is lost;" and again the counter sigh is repeated to the sorrowing heavens for the endless rebellion against God. It is not without probability that in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original transgression. In dreams, perhaps under some secret conflict of the midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.

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The incident, so memorable in itself by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye, which furnished the text for this reverie upon *Sudden Death*, occurred to myself in the dead of night, as a solitary spectator, when seated on the box of the Manchester and Glasgow mail in the second or



third summer after Waterloo. I find it necessary to relate the circumstances, because they are such as could not have occurred unless under a singular combination of accidents. In those days, the oblique and lateral communications with many rural post-offices were so arranged, either through necessity or through defect of system, as to make it requisite for the main northwestern mail (*i. e.*, the *down* mail), on reaching Manchester, to halt for a number of hours; how many, I do not remember, — six or seven, I think; but the result was, that, in the ordinary course, the mail recommenced its journey northwards about midnight. Wearied with the long detention at a gloomy hotel, I walked out about eleven o'clock at night for the sake of fresh air, meaning to fall in with the mail and resume my seat at the post-office. The night, however, being yet dark, as the moon had scarcely risen, and the streets being at that hour empty, so as to offer no opportunities for asking the road, I lost my way; and did not reach the post-office until it was considerably past midnight; but, to my great relief (as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning), I saw in the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom, an evidence that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was, but, by some rare accident, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race and notifying to the Christian and the heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has hoisted his pocket-handkerchief once and forever upon that virgin soil; thenceforward claiming the *jus dominii* to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it; so that all people found after this warning, either aloft in upper chambers of the atmosphere, or groping in subterraneous shafts, or squatting audaciously on the surface of the soil, will be treated as trespassers, — kicked, that is to say, or decapitated, as circumstances may suggest, by their very faithful servant, the owner of the said pocket-handkerchief. In the present case, it is probable that my cloak might not have been respected, and the *jus gentium* might have been cruelly violated in my person — for, in the dark, people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality — but it so happened



that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger; and thus the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal.

Having mounted the box, I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already travelled two hundred and fifty miles; viz., from a point seventy miles beyond London. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in *that* also there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my own attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of bulk, and that he had but one eye. In fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as

“*Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum.*”

He answered to the conditions in every one of the items: 1, a monster he was; 2, dreadful; 3, shapeless; 4, huge; 5, who had lost an eye. But why should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the “Arabian Nights,” and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult: I delighted in no man’s punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the south for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could (if *any* could) have driven six-in-hand full gallop over *Al Sirat* — that dreadful bridge of Mahomet, with no side battlements, and of *extra* room not enough for a razor’s edge — leading right across the bottomless gulf. Under this eminent man, whom in Greek I cognominated Cyclops *diphrelates* (Cyclops the charioteer), I, and others known to me, studied the diphrelatic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. As a pupil, though I paid extra fees, it is to be lamented that I did not stand high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Let us excuse his absurdity in this particular, by remembering his want of an eye. Doubtless *that* made him blind to my merits. In the art of conversation, however, he admitted that I had the whip-hand of him. On this present occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men re-

commended northern air, or how ? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in some suit-at-law now pending at Lancaster ; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for ? Surely we have now waited long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and this procrastinating post-office ! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me* ? Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Yet you are witness, reader, that I was kept here waiting for the post-office. Will the post-office lay its hand on its heart, in its moments of sobriety, and assert that ever it waited for me ? What are they about ? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war, by wind, by weather, in the packet service, which as yet does not benefit at all by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good-by ; we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office ; which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to look sharply for this lost hour amongst the next eight or nine, and to recover it (if we can) at the rate of one mile extra per hour. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles per hour ; and for the moment I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, there were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, counting from Manchester, terminate in Lancaster, which is therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three stages terminate in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it is that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north become confluent. Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adven-

ture. During the first stage, I found out that Cyclops was mortal: he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep—a thing which previously I had never suspected. If a man indulges in the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute his notions, avail him nothing. “Oh, Cyclops!” I exclaimed, “thou art mortal! My friend, thou snoorest.” Through the first eleven miles, however, this infirmity—which I grieve to say that he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon—betrayed itself only by brief snatches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending matters, laid open a gloomy vista of coming disasters. The summer assizes, he reminded me, were now going on at Lancaster: in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his own summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested; or else, lest he should be missing at the critical moment, was drinking with the other witnesses under the pastoral surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it which at sea would form the middle watch, he was driving. This explanation certainly accounted for his drowsiness, but in a way which made it much more alarming; since now, after several days’ resistance to this infirmity, at length he was steadily giving way. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep rested upon him; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing “Love amongst the Roses” for perhaps thirty times without invitation and without applause, had in revenge moodily resigned himself to slumber—not so deep, doubtless, as the coachman’s, but deep enough for mischief. And thus at last, about ten miles from Preston, it came about that I found myself left in charge of His Majesty’s London and Glasgow mail, then running at the least twelve miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time, all the law business of populous Liverpool, and also of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage

to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required, 1, a conflict with powerful established interests; 2, a large system of new arrangements; and 3, a new parliamentary statute. But as yet this change was merely in contemplation. As things were at present, twice in the year so vast a body of business rolled northwards from the southern quarter of the county, that for a fortnight at least it occupied the severe exertions of two judges in its despatch. The consequence of this was that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the roads sank into profound silence. Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.

On this occasion the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in the middle of which lay my own birthday — a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born thoughts. The county was my own native county — upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labor in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding back into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labor) to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven,

the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight and the first timid tremblings of the dawn were by this time blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds and on the earth prevailed the same majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain of a school-master has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false, feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must forever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth, upwards to the sandals of God.

Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark, unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of



the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. *Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, — the first face of which was horror, the parting face a jest, — for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remark this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road — viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre — would prove attractive to others. The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*. Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us, would rely upon *us* for quartering. All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, was that which stole upon the air, as again the far-off sound of a wheel was heard? A whisper it was — a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off — secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed. What could be done — who was it that could do it — to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it? See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has



kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gayety in a gig? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us* — and, woe is me! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self — rests the responsibility of warning. Yet how should this be accomplished? Might I not sound the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the accident which I have mentioned of the foreign mails' being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was apparently finished. The court was sitting; the case was heard; the judge had finished; and the only verdict was yet in arrear.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light enough to perceive, at the further end of this Gothic aisle, a frail reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir! what are you about? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communications to this young lady — though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you — is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it, being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads.

Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. Oh, heavens! what is it that I shall do? Speaking or acting, what help can I offer? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the Iliad to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig horse. I shouted — and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted — and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could* be done: more on *my* part was not possible. Mine had been the first step; the second was for the young man; the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side — or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation, pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection — he will, at least, make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; *let* him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in him, must, by the fiercest of translations — must, without time for a prayer — must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

.But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day; ah! what a sublime thing does courage

seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, "One way lies hope; take the other, and mourn forever!" How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation, — is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *Him*!

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose; stood upright; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind-legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved, except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late; fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments — *they* hurry! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses — *they* also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our overtowering shadow, — *that* was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage

— was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed — that all was finished as regarded any further effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, “Father, which art in heaven, do thou finish above what I on earth have attempted.” Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely and not quite so far advanced as to be accurately parallel with the near wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart forever.

Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage — partly, perhaps, from the violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it — as if it sympathized with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady —

But the lady —! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever

depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing? Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night — from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight — from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love — suddenly as from the woods and fields — suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation — suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death, the crownéd phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered; the strife was finished; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams forever.

## SECTION THE THIRD — DREAM-FUGUE

FOUNDED ON THE PRECEDING THEME OF SUDDEN DEATH

“ Whence the sound  
 Of instruments, that made melodious chime,  
 Was heard, of harp and organ ; and who moved  
 Their stops and chords, was seen ; his volant touch  
 Instinct through all proportions, low and high,  
 Fleed and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.”

*Paradise Lost*, book xi.

*Tumultuosissimamente.*

PASSION of sudden death ! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs ! — rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst tombs in churches I have seen) of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds — of woman’s Ionic form bending from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped, adoring hands — waiting, watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet’s call to rise from dust forever ! Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses ! — vision that didst start back, that didst reel away, like a shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind ! Epilepsy so brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die ? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of dreams ? Fragment of music too passionate, heard once, and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and, after forty years, have lost no element of horror ?

## I

Lo, it is summer — almighty summer ! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide, and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating — she upon a fiery pin-nace, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless



chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasures as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnace moved! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers, — young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards *us* amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnace nears us, gayly she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter — all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnace, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold! the pinnace was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. “But where,” and I turned to our crew, “where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers and clustering corymbi! Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them*?” Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the masthead, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, “Sail on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us: in seventy seconds she also will founder.”

## II

I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. “Are they mad?” some voice exclaimed from our deck. “Do they woo their ruin?” But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnace. The deeps opened

ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea: whilst still by sight I followed her as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling — rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying — there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden forever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how,

## III

Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl, adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril, and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried: only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens: and, last of all, was visible one white marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head as it was sinking down to darkness — saw this marble arm as it rose above her head and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching as at some false, deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds — saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope, and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm, — these all had

sunk ; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed ; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn.

I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar as from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush !" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen, — "hush ! — this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else" — and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head — "or else, oh heavens ! it is *victory* that is final, victory that swallows up all strife."

#### IV

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre : we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived within an hour of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries ; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and *Te Deums* reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sat upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and tramlings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshy weariness, upbraided us with delay. Wherefore *was* it that we delayed ? We waited for a secret word that should bear witness to the hope of nations as now accomplished forever. At midnight the secret word arrived ; which word was — Waterloo and Recovered Christendom ! The dreadful word shone by its own light ; before us it went ; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of

the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty Minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word that rode before us reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace; and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying, —

“Chant the deliverer’s praise in every tongue,”

and receiving answers from afar, —

“Such as once in heaven and earth were sung.”

And of their chanting was no end; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.

Thus, as we ran like torrents — thus, as we swept with bridal rapture over the Campo Santo of the cathedral graves — suddenly we became aware of a vast necropolis rising upon the far-off horizon — a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth. Of purple granite was the necropolis; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs,

bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields, — battles from forgotten ages, battles from yesterday, battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers, battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands, like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests, faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us, — dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Crecy to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us we beheld afar off a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists which went before her hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played, — but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. “Oh, baby!” I exclaimed, “shalt thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we that carry tidings of great joy to every people be messengers of ruin to thee!” In horror I rose at the thought; but then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on a bas-relief — a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of battle he rose to his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips — sounding once, and yet once again, proclamation that, in *thy* ears, oh baby! spoke from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the dreadful rattle of our harness, the groaning of our wheels, alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked into life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in mid-air to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded; the seals were taken off all pulses; life, and

the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling of storms and darkness; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips, as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us, "Whither has the infant fled? — is the young child caught up to God?" Lo! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory. A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed *through* the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted *on* the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth? There, suddenly, within that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman's head, and then of a woman's figure. The child it was — grown up to woman's height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, voiceless she stood — sinking, rising, raving, despairing; and behind the volume of incense, that, night and day, streamed upwards from the altar, dimly was seen the fiery font, and the shadow of that dreadful being who should have baptized her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings; that wept and pleaded for *her*; that prayed when *she* could *not*; that fought with Heaven by tears for *her* deliverance; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that from Heaven he had won at last.

## V

Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals — gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense — threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter! — with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing — didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo, farewell love and farewell anguish, rang through the dreadful *Sanctus*. Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font wert visited and searched by the effulgence in the



angel's eye — were these indeed thy children? Poms of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again to the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with the festivals of Death? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man. All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us that with laurelled heads were passing from the cathedral they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own. As brothers we moved together, — to the dawn that advanced, to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest, that, having hid His face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending — from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending — in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom, having overshadowed with His ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside his arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden forever, found an occasion to glorify His goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn — with the secret word riding before thee — with the armies of the grave behind thee: seen thee sinking, rising, raving, despairing; a thousand times in the worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by God's angel through storms; through desert seas; through the darkness of quicksands; through dreams, and the dreadful revelations that are in dreams, — only that at the last, with one sling of His victorious arm, He might snatch thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in thy deliverance the endless resurrections of His love!

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### JOAN OF ARC

SINCE De Quincey did not intend "to write the history of La Pucelle," the following brief account of her life may be of some assistance to the reader. Joan of Arc was born at Domrémy, in 1412. She was the daughter of a peasant, and her childhood was spent in rural seclusion. When she appears in history the English hold all France north of the Loire, and Queen Isabella is supporting the pretensions of Henry VI of England to the French throne against the claims of her own son, the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII. The prophecy was that France would be overwhelmed by disasters in this struggle with England, but would finally be delivered by a virgin from the forest of Domrémy. Joan, insisting that voices had commanded her to liberate her country, finally made her way to the court of the Dauphin, and persuaded him to make her general of his army with full power of command. She raised the siege of Orleans, May 8th, 1429; conquered the enemy at Patay, June 18th; and enabled Charles to reach Rheims and be crowned, July 17th. On the 24th of May, 1430, she was captured by the Duke of Burgundy, who sold her to the English. They, on the ground that her remarkable successes were evidences of witchcraft, burned her at the stake as a heretic, May 30th, 1431. Some of the following accounts of her career ought to be read, if one is to sympathize intelligently with De Quincey's attitude toward his heroine.

Green's *History of the English People*, Vol. ii, 534-543.

Michelet's *History of France*, Vol. ii, bk. x, chap. iii-iv, or

Michelet's *Joan of Arc* in the Biographical Series (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.).

Kitchin's *History of France*, Vol. i, bk. iv, chap. vi-vii.

Creasy's *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, chap. ix.

A complete record of her trial was kept in official notes afterwards edited in Latin by Pierre Cauchon. These were translated into French in 1868, and have been made the basis of subsequent accounts of her judgment and death.

PAGE 1

**Arc:** "Modern France, that should know a great deal better than myself, insists that the name is not D'Arc — *i. e.* of Arc — but *Darc*. Now it happens sometimes that, if a person whose position

guarantees his access to the best information will content himself with gloomy dogmatism, striking the table with his fist, and saying in a terrific voice, 'It *is* so, and there's an end of it,' one bows deferentially, and submits. But, if, unhappily for himself, won by this docility, he relents too amiably into reasons and arguments, probably one raises an insurrection against him that may never be crushed; for in the fields of logic one can skirmish, perhaps, as well as he. Had he confined himself to dogmatism, he would have intrenched his position in darkness, and have hidden his vulnerable points. But, coming down to base reasons, he lets in light, and one sees where to plant the blows. Now, the worshipful reason of modern France for disturbing the old received spelling is that Jean Hordal, a descendant of *La Pucelle's* brother, spelled the name *Darc* in 1612. But what of that? It is notorious that what small matter of spelling Providence had thought fit to disburse amongst man in the seventeenth century was all monopolized by printers; now, M. Hordal was *not* a printer." (De Quincey.) **thought of her:** the dramatic pause after the question might well be filled by the historian Green's estimate of Joan. He judges her "the one pure figure which rises out of the greed, the lust, the selfishness, and the unbelief of the time." **Lorraine:** since De Quincey has said so much of the influence of Joan's early home upon her character, the peculiar situation of Lorraine is worthy of attention. It was a province that, despite all its changes from kingdom to duchy, or to imperial fief, "managed to keep its location unchanged," — on the borderland between France and Germany. These two powers took turns in capturing it from each other. Hence it was more than a provincial duchy; it lay in the path of all intercourse between two great nations, and "must stir when either moved." Add to that interest and alertness the patriotism of Lorraine, of which De Quincey makes a point later, and we shall see why he chooses to make Joan a Lorrainer instead of a Champenoise. **the Hebrew shepherd boy:** De Quincey's allusion to David brings up a whole train of parallelisms which might be drawn between him and Joan, — their youth, their beauty, their occupations, their obscurity, their divine missions, etc. Cf. 1 Samuel, xvi, 2, "There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep;" 1 Samuel, xvi, 12, "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." Browning's description of the boy David bears almost the exact imprint of many of the old descriptions of Joan: —

"God's child, with his dew  
On thy gracious gold hair."

**Adverse armies:** cf. 2 Samuel, v, 1, 3, "Then came *all* the tribes of Israel to David, . . . and they anointed David king over

Israel." from a station of good will: De Quincey lays stress upon this point of view because his quarrel with M. Michelet is upon the ground of the latter's "bitter and unfair spirit." **the sceptre was departing from Judah:** cf. Genesis, xlix, 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." **Vaucouleurs:** a village near Domrémy. There Joan made her mission known to the captain of the town and begged him to send her to the French court. **those that share thy blood:** "A collateral relative of Joan's was subsequently ennobled by the title of Du Lys." (De Quincey.)

## PAGE 2

**Sleeping the sleep of the dead:** cf. Psalm xiii, 3, "Consider and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." **apparitors:** the legal term for the officer who executes the orders of the judge. **en contumace:** the legal term applied to one who fails to answer the summons of the court. De Quincey suggests here, by his choice of words, the atmosphere of the trial. **universal France:** *i. e.* all of France. So Milton uses the word, —

"At which the universal host upsent  
A shout that tore Hell's concave."

*Paradise Lost*, Bk. i, 540, 541.

**as even yet may happen:** a papal decree, issued July 7th, 1456, pronounced the sentence executed upon Joan reversed, and exonerated her memory from all taint of heresy. "The thunders of universal France" are heard now in poetry, drama, painting, and sculpture. Southey, Schiller, Lamartine, and Voltaire have sounded her praises in letters; Balfe, in opera; Lenepveu, in his paintings in the Panthéon in Paris; and in Paris alone there are three statues of Joan of Arc, one of them, that in the Boulevard Malesherbes, being a replica of the figure by Dubois at Rheims. **Rouen:** there in the marketplace Joan was burned alive. A monument to her memory now marks the spot. **the lilies of France:** the fleur-de-lis, the royal emblem of France as far back as the reign of Clovis. It is interesting to note in passing that some authorities consider the fleur-de-lis not a lily, but a conventionalized spear-head. **in another century:** the century of the Revolution of 1789, when Royalty was dethroned and the Commune established.

## PAGE 3

**M. Michelet (1798–1874):** An eminent historian whose greatest work was the *Histoire de France*, to the writing of which he devoted forty years of his life. His style abounds in emotion and poetic leaps and bounds which De Quincey calls "rhapsodies of incoherence" or the craze of "laughing gas." The "book against priests" may be either *Du Prêtre, de la Femme et de la Famille*,

or *Les Jésuites*. **recovered liberty**: De Quincey, writing in 1847, refers here to the Revolution of 1830, which deposed the Bourbons; and he may be prophesying also the approach of the Revolution of 1848. **Chevy Chase**: the ballad reads, —

“The Persé owt off Northombarlande  
And a vowe to God mayd he,  
That he would hunte in the mountayns  
Off Chyviot within days thre.”

#### PAGE 4

**la Pucelle**: the maid. **only now forthcoming**: “In 1847 began the publication of Joanna’s trial. It was interrupted, I fear, by the convulsions of 1848; and whether even yet finished I do not know.” (De Quincey.) “The reference seems to be to Quicherat: *Procès de condamnation et réhabilitation de Jeanne d’Arc*, in five volumes, Paris, 1841–9.” (Masson.) **Hannibal**: the Carthaginian general who contrived to cross the Alps and ravaged Italy. The Romans narrowly escaped destruction at his hands by defeating him at the Battle of Cannæ, 216 B. C. **Mithridates**: King of Pontus, who contested the sovereignty of the East with Rome. “The only real honor he ever received upon earth” was, probably, the royal funeral granted him by his conqueror, Pompey. **Delenda est Anglia victrix**: *Victorious England must be destroyed!* An echo of Cato’s *Delenda est Carthago*. **Hyder Ali**: A Maharajah of British India, who, with his son, **Tippoo**, proved a formidable enemy to England. His champion was Edmund Burke, whose grounds for admiration may be found in his speech *On the Nabob of Arcot’s Debts*.

#### PAGE 5

**Napoleon**: De Quincey calls him in his essay on Charlemagne “a sciolist for any age” and “the sole barbarian of his time, presenting in his deficiencies the picture of a low mechanic, and in his positive qualities the violence and brutality of a savage.” **Suffrein**: often spelled Suffren: the French admiral who defended the French possessions along the Coromandel coast, and defeated the English so brilliantly that Hyder Ali travelled miles to see him, and said to him: “Heretofore I thought myself a great man and a great general; but now I know that you alone are a great man.” Thereupon he placed aigrettes of diamonds, taken from his own turban, upon Suffren’s head. When asked by Suffren if he would go to the coast and see the victorious fleet, he replied: “I put myself out to see *you* only; I will not go any farther.” An interesting account of their common cause against the English may be found in Guizot’s *History of France*, vol. vi, 412–415. **Magnanimous justice of Englishmen**: what of Shakespeare’s treatment of Joan in *Henry VI*? **Jean**: “M. Michelet asserts that there was a mystical meaning at that era in calling a

child *Jean*; it implied a secret commendation of a child, if not a dedication, to St. John the Evangelist, the beloved disciple, the apostle of love and mysterious visions. But, really, as the name was so exceedingly common, few people will detect a mystery in calling a *boy* by the name of Jack, though it *does* seem mysterious to call a girl *Jack*. It may be less so in France, where a beautiful practice has always prevailed of giving a boy his mother's name, — preceded and strengthened by a male name, as *Charles Anne*, *Victor Victoire*. In cases where a mother's memory has been unusually dear to a son, this vocal memento of her, locked into the circle of his own name, gives to it the tenderness of a testamentary relic or a funeral ring. I presume, therefore, that *La Pucelle* must have borne the baptismal name of Jeanne Jean; the latter with no reference, perhaps, to so sublime a person as St. John, but simply to some relative." (De Quincey.) **Champenoise**: What M. Michelet really says is: "Jeanne's father, Jacques Darc, was a worthy Champenois. Jeanne, no doubt, inherited her disposition from this parent; she had none of the Lorraine ruggedness, but much rather the Champenoise mildness; that simplicity, blended with sense and shrewdness, which is observable in Joinville." **for no better reason**: is De Quincey's reason for making Joan a Lorrainer any better? **cis and trans**: *this side of and beyond*.

## PAGE 6

**two mighty realms**: "And reminding one of that inscription so greatly admired by Paul Richter, which a Russian Czarina placed on a guidepost near Moscow: *This is the road that leads to Constantinople*." (De Quincey.) **Bar**: a small duchy, later united to Lorraine. **three great successive battles**: At Crécy fell Rudolf of Lorraine; at Agincourt, Frederick of Lorraine; and the whole Christian army, with the third duke, was defeated in 1396 at Nicopolis.

## PAGE 7

**burden**: used in this sense the word is derived from the O. E. *burdon*, — the bass in music; hence the burden is the heavy, persisting theme. **hurtling**: a favorite word with the old writers. Cf. "And he that hurtleth with his horse adown" (Chaucer); "His harmefull club he gan to hurtle bye" (Spenser); "A strong man hurtlide azens a strong man" (Wyclif's Bible, Jer. xlv. 12). **Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt**: battles in the Hundred Years' War, brought about by the English attempt to establish Edward III of England upon the French throne, on the ground that his mother, Isabelle, was sister to Charles IV, King of France, who had died leaving no son. The first battle after Edward had landed in France was at Crécy in 1346, in which the Black Prince won his first honors. Here the French were routed by "the fatal snow-



storm" of white arrows from the English archers. The victory of Poitiers followed in 1356, won by the Black Prince alone. So great a victory was this that he found he had twice as many prisoners as soldiers, and the poor French king, John, who vowed that he would here wipe out the disgrace of Crécy, only doubled it. In 1380 Charles VI came to the French throne. Through some sudden fright he had become insane, and France divided itself into two factions; one following the Duke of Burgundy, one the Duke of Orleans, both of whom were uncles of the imbecile king. Henry V of England took advantage of this state of affairs to assert a claim to the French throne as unfounded as that of his great-grandfather, Edward III. He invaded France and defeated the French army in the brilliant battle of Agincourt in 1415. Joan was then about four years old. Two years later Henry captured Rouen, and fear of his army was so great that the French factions began to unite against him. But in 1420, by the treaty of Troyes, Isabella gave her daughter to Henry for wife, disinherited the Dauphin, and agreed that, upon the death of Charles VI, Henry should succeed to the French throne. Joan's attempt to save the throne for the Dauphin from the hands of Henry VI (Henry V died soon after the treaty of Troyes) carries on the history from this point. **the insurrection of the peasantry**: a caricature of that day tells the woes of the peasant, or Jacques Bonhomme, as he was called, in seven figures as follows: the first figure is the King, who says, "I levy taxes;" the second is the nobleman, who says, "I have a free estate;" the third is the priest, who says, "I take tithes;" the fourth is the merchant, who says, "I live by my profits;" the fifth is the hired soldier, who declares, "I pay for nothing;" the sixth is the beggar, saying, "I have nothing." Last comes the peasant, saying, "God help me, for I have to support king, nobleman, priest, merchant, soldier, and beggar!" **the termination of the Crusades**: through the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries the crusading spirit sent many an army to the Holy Land to deliver the Holy Sepulchre from the infidels. Although they did not succeed in establishing the Christians in Palestine permanently, they did assure the power of the Eastern Empire for four hundred years, and preserved eastern Europe from the Mohammedans. The end of the Crusades meant reaction from the higher religious motives for war, which had united kings and nobles in a common cause, to the old petty struggles of avarice and ambition; in these struggles the former serfs were to be a strong element, for their barons, to gain money to carry on the Crusades, had often sold them their liberty; and the kings, whose power had been unrestricted during the absence of their nobles, were to be a more tyrannical and self-willed element to deal with. **the destruction of the Templars**: the Knights

Templars was a military order established to Protect the pilgrims who journeyed to the Holy Land. When the Crusades ended, and there was no longer a definite work for the Templars to perform, the avaricious king, Philippe le Bel, whom Dante called "the pest of France," saw that it was possible for him to accuse the Templars of leading profligate, useless lives, and, as a punishment, to confiscate their richest estates throughout the Continent. So, although the Templars had once saved his life, he arrested the Grand Master and certain prominent members, convicted them unjustly of heresy, sent them to the stake, and poured the gold which came from the sale of their estates into his own coffers. The "ominous sound" from these outrages was voiced in the legend that every year an armed figure issued from the Grand Master's tomb, crying, "Who will liberate the Holy Sepulchre?" And the portentous answer always was, "No one; for behold the Templars are destroyed." **the Papal interdicts:** Philippe le Bel, wanting money, dared, in 1296, to tax the clergy, and so received from the Pope a bull of censure which the king ordered to be hanged. The quarrel between them that ensued ended in the Pope's interdict, cutting off Philip "from all communion in this world and hope of salvation in the world to come." The Pope's second bull against Philip is reported to have begun: "Boniface, the Pope, to Philip the Fair, greeting: Know, O Supreme Prince, that thou art subject to us in all things." The king, thereupon, circulated this burlesque reply: "Philip to Boniface, little or no greeting: Be it known to thy Supreme Idiocy that we are subject to no man in political matters. Those who think otherwise we count to be fools and madmen." An interdict meant the suspension of all ecclesiastical functions and protection of the church; and this incident will serve as an example of many such quarrels between Pope and King which led to the passing of interdicts. **the tragedies caused and suffered by the house of Anjou:** the chapter of all the misfortunes of this family is a long one. A few of the most notable of their sufferings are the following. Charles of Anjou, as king of Sicily, reigned with a cruelty that gave rise to a revolt, known as the "Sicilian Vespers," that massacred every Frenchman on the island, lost Sicily to the French, and was really the cause of Charles's death from vexation and chagrin. The life of René, Duke of Anjou, was one long struggle to defend his possessions and titles against rival claimants. Finally he retired to Provence, where he lived totally dependent upon the will of King Louis, to whom he was forced to promise, at his death, his duchies of Maine and Anjou. Margaret of Anjou, wife of the mad king, Henry VI, contended all her life to put her son Edward upon the English throne, only to see him killed at Tewksbury, her husband dying in the Tower of London, and herself obliged to return to France as a ransomed

prisoner. **the emperor:** possibly Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, whose assent to the burning of John Huss, as a heretic, led to the Hussite War, which lasted from 1419 to 1436, the year before the Emperor's death. Or perhaps, as Professor Hart points out, De Quincey refers to Konradin, the last of the Hohenstaufen, beheaded by Charles of Anjou at Naples in 1268.

## PAGE 8

**On tiptoe at Crécy:** "But the fall of France was hardly so sudden or so incomprehensible as the ruin at a single blow of a system of warfare, and of the political and social fabric which rested on it. Feudalism depended on the superiority of the mounted noble to the unmounted churl; its fighting power lay in its knighthood. But the English yeomen and small freeholders who bore the bow in the national feud had raised their weapon into a terrible engine of war; in the English archers Edward carried a new class of soldiers to the fields of France. The churl had struck down the noble; the yeoman proved more than a match in sheer hard fighting for the knight. From the day of Crécy feudalism tottered slowly but surely to its grave." (Green's *Short History of the English People*.) **Spectacle of a double pope:** King Philip, after the death of the Pope, who had dared to excommunicate him, appointed his own pope, from whom he exacted one tenth of the revenue of the church, and whom he shut up in Avignon in 1395 for a long period derisively called "The Babylonish Captivity." In 1378 the Italians elected a pope at Rome, and the French persisted in electing theirs at Avignon. So was caused the "Great Schism," ending in 1417, when the Pope at Rome again became head of the Church. **rents which no man should ever heal:** De Quincey refers here to the final separation of the Protestant from the Romish church as effected by Martin Luther. **Misereres:** Miserere is the first word of the 51st Psalm in the Latin version, meaning, *have mercy*. **Te Deums:** Te Deum laudamus, *we praise thee, O God*. The first words of a Latin hymn.

## PAGE 9

**Abbeys there were, etc.:** Cf. Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*:—

"Temples like those among the Hindoos,  
And mosques, and spires, and abbey windows,  
And castles all with ivy green."

(Note of Prof. Milton Haight Turk.)

**German Diets:** the legislative assemblies in the old German Empire: the Reichstag has taken their place to-day. **the Vosges:** these mountains were also to attract some attention in 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War. **the Allies:** England, Russia, Prussia, Sweden, Austria, allied against Napoleon. **those mysterious fauns; that ancient stag:** in the romances of the Middle Ages

a knight was sometimes while hunting led by a white doe or hart into the "Happy Other-World." Alexander the Great is said by Pliny to have caught a white stag, placed a gold chain about its neck, and set it free. Charlemagne is reported to have caught a white hart in the Holstein Woods. (This information should be credited to Professor Turk's note, which, in turn, makes acknowledgments to Mr. S. W. Kinney, A. M., of Baltimore and to Professor Manly of Chicago.) **Carlovingian princes:** the descendants of Charlemagne, or *Carolus Magnus*.

## PAGE 10

**Marquis:** from the word *mark* or *march*, meaning *boundary*. **Sir Roger de Coverley:** when Will Wimble appealed to Sir Roger as a representative of the law to settle a dispute between himself and Tom Touchy, Sir Roger replied, with tactful impartiality, "There 's much to be said on both sides." See *The Spectator*, No. xx. **the desert between Syria and the Euphrates:** known as the Syrian, sometimes the Bedouin desert. **Bergereta:** shepherdess; the French noun *bergerette* with the Latin feminine ending; possibly a form of late Latin.

## PAGE 11

**M. Simond in his "Travels: "** De Quincey quotes this story more than once in the course of his writings. (Masson.) **prædial servant:** *prædial* formerly had the restricted meaning of service owed by one as a tenant of the land; probably De Quincey uses it here more loosely for *farm servant*. **Friday:** the young Indian on the Island of Juan Fernandez whom Defoe's Robinson Crusoe saved from death on Friday (hence his name), and kept as his servant.

## PAGE 12

**Chevalier of St. Louis:** a knight of the order of St. Louis, founded by Louis XIV in 1693 for military service, and taking its name from Louis IX, who, dying during a crusade against Tunis in 1270, was canonized by the Pope. **Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?** *Chevalier, have you fed the hog?* **Ma fille, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?** *My daughter, have you fed the hog?* **Pucelle d'Orleans, as-tu sauvé les fleurs-de-lys?** *Maid of Orleans, have you saved the kingdom?* **If the man that turnips cries, etc.:** Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* credits this stanza to Madame Piozzi's *Johnsoniana*. **Oriflamme:** *the flame of gold;* the banner of St. Denis carried in war before the king of France as a consecrated flag and the special royal ensign. Cf. Macaulay's line in *The Battle of Ivry*: —

"And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre."

**Southey's Joan of Arc:** as an attempt at an epic, undertaken in Southey's nineteenth year and written in six weeks, it is a somewhat crude performance. **Chinon:** a town near Tours. The room

in the royal apartments there where Charles VII first saw Joan can still be visited. **coup d'essai**: first trial.

#### PAGE 13

**pricks for sheriffs**: the Lord Lieutenant of the county draws up a list of three names for sheriff. The Sovereign then, without looking at the names, pierces the paper twice, and those whose names are pricked are declared appointed. Cf. the use of the word in Shakespeare:—

“These many then shall die ; their names are *pricked*.”

*Julius Cæsar*, IV, 1.

**Lady of the Islands and the Orient**: the royal title, of which De Quincey's words seem prophetic, is now Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India, the latter having been formally proclaimed as belonging to Victoria at Delhi, January 1st, 1877. **On the throne**: Southey's *Joan of Arc*, Bk. iii, l. 235 ff. **un peu fort**: *a little too strong*. **he had no crown**: because the English declared Charles VII illegitimate and set up the claim of Henry VI in his place: their power in northern France had prevented the crowning and consecration of Charles at Rheims. **Rheims**: the cathedral at Rheims was the historic place for the coronation of the French kings from Philip II to Charles X. It was the French Westminster Abbey. **ampulla**: the vase in which the holy oil for coronation was kept. This one, according to the legend, was brought from heaven by an angel for the coronation of the French king Clovis in 486.

#### PAGE 14

**the English boy**: Henry VI, who was proclaimed king of France and England in 1422, Charles VI of France and Henry V of England having both died in that year. **the ovens of Rheims**: is De Quincey really thinking of the famous bakeries of Rheims, and perhaps playing upon the word *ovens*, which may mean also the inmost sanctuaries of a cathedral where a king might be crowned? **Tindal's "Christianity as Old as the Creation"**: published in 1730, and often called the "Bible of Theism." **a parte ante**: *from the past*, because Joan's speech was made three hundred years before Tindal's book was written. **Cottle**: Southey's publisher in Bristol. **depositions**: testimonies given by the witnesses. **Oh, what a multitude**, etc.: *Paradise Regained*, i, 196–205.

#### PAGE 15

**France Delivered**: is De Quincey echoing Tasso's title, *Jerusalem Delivered*?

#### PAGE 16

**Battle of Patay**: "The battle began on the 18th of June at Patay, between Orleans and Chateaudun. By Joan's advice the French attacked. 'In the name of God,' she said, 'we must fight. Though the English were suspended from the clouds we should have them,



for God hath sent us to punish them. The gentle King shall have to-day the greatest victory he has ever had; my counsel hath told me they are ours.' The English lost heart in their turn; the battle was short, and the victory brilliant." (Guizot.) **Troyes:** before the town of Troyes Joan was summoned before the council of the king's generals to answer whether or not she approved of their giving up the idea of taking the town. "Joan, turning to the king, asked him if he would believe her. 'Speak,' said the King; 'if you say what is reasonable and tends to profit, readily will you be believed.' 'Gentle King of France,' said Joan, 'if you be willing to abide here before your town of Troyes, it shall be at your disposal within two days by love or by force; make no doubt of it.' 'Joan,' replied the chancellor, 'whoever could be certain of having it within six days might well wait for it; but say you true?' Joan repeated her assertion; and it was decided to wait. Joan mounted her horse, and, with her banner in her hand, she went through the camp, giving orders everywhere to prepare for the assault. She had her own tent pitched close to the ditch, 'doing more,' says a contemporary, 'than two of the ablest captains would have done.' On the next day, July 10th, all was ready. Joan had the fascines thrown into the ditches, and was shouting out 'Assault!' when the inhabitants of Troyes, burgesses and men-at-arms, came demanding permission to capitulate." (Guizot.) **she crowned him:** "It was solemn and emotional, as are all old national traditions which recur after a forced suspension. Joan rode between Dunois and the Archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of France. The air resounded with the *Te Deum* sung with all their hearts by the clergy and the crowd. 'In God's name,' said Joan to Dunois, 'here is a good people and a devout; when I die, I should much like to be in these parts.' 'Joan,' inquired Dunois, 'know you when you will die and in what place?' 'I know not,' said she, 'for I am at the will of God.' Then she added, 'I have accomplished that which my Lord commanded me, — to raise the siege of Orleans and have the gentle King crowned. I would like it well if it should please him to send me back to my father and mother, to keep their sheep and cattle, and do that which was my wont.' " (Guizot.) **excepting one man:** from Orleans to Rheims, Maçon, the president of the council, strongly championed Joan. Dunois, also, sincerely admired her, and Schiller represents him as her lover. **the uncles of Henry VI:** the Dukes of Bedford and Gloucester; the former was appointed by Henry V at his death Regent of France, while the latter was left Lord Protector of England.

PAGE 17

**Nonlebat, etc.:** *she hesitated to use her sword or to kill any one.*

PAGE 18

**Compiègne:** this town was regarded as the important gate of the



road between Ile-de-France and Picardy; and the Duke of Burgundy attached much importance to holding it. There Joan fought her last fight, in May, and, being taken, became the prisoner of Count John for six months. In November she was sold to the English, and on January 3d, 1431, an order from Henry VI placed her in the hands of Pierre Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais. Some thought that the French officers, seeing the merit of every victory ascribed to her, had willingly exposed her to capture. **her trial:** it lasted from Feb. 21st to May 30th. The court held four sittings, mostly in Joan's prison, where she was manacled and chained, and guarded by four or five rough common soldiers. For a vivid description of her trial, including a good sketch of the character of the Bishop of Beauvais, read Kitchin's *History of France*, iii, 125-139. **Bishop that art:** a reminder of the witches' prophecy, —

“All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Glamis!  
All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane of Cawdor!  
All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!”

*Macbeth*, I, 3.

**triple crown:** the pope's tiara was composed of a cap of gold cloth, surrounded by three coronets, and surmounted by a ball and cross of gold.

#### PAGE 19

**Dominican:** one of the order of friars founded in 1216 by St. Dominic of Languedoc. **to entrap her:** history says that Joan, when questioned as to matters upon which she felt she had a perfect right to keep silence, used to reply, “Go on to something else,” with a quiet authority that dumbfounded her inquisitors. **Man and woman should leave, etc.:** cf. Genesis, ii, 24.

#### PAGE 20

**Nostalgia:** from the Greek, *νόστος*, the return, and *ἄλγος*, grief; homesickness. **Mozart, Wolfgang:** 1756-1791; the Austrian composer, among whose greatest works are *Don Giovanni*, *The Magic Flute*, and the *Requiem*. **Phidias:** the Athenian sculptor and architect of the age of Pericles. Among the works ascribed to him are the Temple of Theseus, the gold and ivory Athene of the Parthenon, the Olympian Zeus at Elis, and figures in the frieze of the Parthenon. Pericles entrusted to him largely the beautifying of the whole city of Athens. **Michael Angelo:** 1475-1564; Italian sculptor, painter, architect, poet. The David of the Signoria, the Moses of San Pietro in Vincoli, and the Pietà in St. Peter's are some of his greatest pieces of sculpture; his best known paintings are the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel and the Last Judgment; of his poetry we have a few sonnets to Vittoria Colonna; and the fortifications of San Miniato still bear witness to his skill as an architect. **bringing together from the**

**four winds:** cf. "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." (Ezekiel, xxxvii, 9.)

## PAGE 21

**Milton:** John Milton, 1608–1674; English poet and master of prose, *Paradise Lost*, the great English epic, being his greatest poem, and the *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, in Latin, and the *Areopagitica*, in English, his greatest prose works. **Tellurians:** inhabitants of the earth, *tellus*. **St. Peter's . . . on Easter:** when the interior shines in its full glory after the mourning draperies of Lent have been removed, when the clergy wear their richest robes and jewels, and bright throngs of worshippers pour in and out of the church all day. **Luxor:** probably the site of ancient Thebes, whose chief spectacle is the temple built by Rameses II, from which a great dromos of sphinxes leads to Karnak. **Himalayas:** the mountains of the "Snow Abode," containing some of the highest peaks in the world. De Quincey has brought his climax up to the wonders of God. **Marie Antoinette:** the queen of Louis XVI, imprisoned and executed in 1793 during the Reign of Terror. For a graphic account of her martyrdom see Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Bk. vi, chap. vii: a daughter of Cæsars because she was the daughter of Maria Theresa and the German Emperor Francis I, who, as a successor of Charlemagne, would claim his right to be called the head of the Holy Roman Empire. **Charlotte Corday:** another martyr of the French Revolution, who, influenced by her horror at the cruelties of the Reign of Terror, went to Paris in 1793, gained admission to Marat, the most terrible of the Revolutionists, and stabbed him. She, too, was tried by the commune and sent to the guillotine.

## PAGE 22

**Grafton:** chronicler and printer to Edward VI. He printed *The Great Bible*, a work which was stopped by the French government. Grafton fled to England, but Cromwell later rescued his type and brought it to England, where the work was published. Grafton also was the printer of the first Book of Common Prayer, in 1549. **Holinshed:** died about 1580. His great work was *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. No one has made better use of his chronicles than Shakespeare in some of his historical plays and tragedies. Holinshed says of Joan: "Of favor she was counted likesome; of person stronglie made, and manlie: of good courage, great, hardie, and strong withall."

## PAGE 23

**Elder Christian martyrs:** The earliest Christian martyrs, however, were enemies of Cæsar only in one respect, — they refused to burn the incense before Cæsar as a god. In all points, and scrupulously in civil matters, they rendered unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. **a priori:** reasoning from the cause, —

that she is a woman, — to the effect, — that, therefore, she is liable to such weakness. *ergo: therefore.*

## PAGE 24

**onus probandi:** *the burden of proving*; the obligation of presenting evidence. **Bishop of Beauvais:** Pierre Cauchon, prime mover in every illegal step against Joan. Since Joan was captured in his diocese he considered himself her spiritual judge. He it was who contended that every prisoner of war might be redeemed "in the name of the King of England in consideration of an indemnity of ten thousand livres granted to the capturer." The money, already deposited in Rouen by Henry, was too much of a temptation to John of Luxembourg, and he delivered Joan over to the English, relying upon the authority of the Bishop of Beauvais.

## PAGE 26

**Regent of France:** John, Duke of Bedford, uncle of Henry VI. **Lord of Winchester:** the only English member of the court that condemned Joan; he anointed Henry in Notre Dame as king of France. **though one should rise from the dead:** cf. Luke, xvi, 31: "Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." **a tribunal that rises to the clouds:** the picture here presented suggests the words of Joan to the bishop when her sentence was pronounced: "Bishop, you are the cause of my death; if you had put me in the prisons of the Church, and in the hands of fit and proper ecclesiastical warders, this had never happened; I appeal from you to the presence of God." **Who is this that cometh?** Cf. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?" (Isaiah, lxiii, 1.)

## THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

## THE GLORY OF MOTION

## PAGE 27

**Matriculated:** was enrolled as a member of the university. **M. P.:** Member of Parliament. **the daughter of a duke:** "Lady Madeline Gordon." (De Quincey.) **Mr. Palmer:** John Palmer, proprietor of the Theatre Royal of Bath, for the sake of ensuring the punctual arrival of his actors, promoted the system of government coaches to carry the mails and a limited number of passengers. Masson thinks, however, that it was another Mr. Palmer who married "the daughter of an Earl," and that De Quincey has made a mistake here. **Galileo (1564-1642):** the famous Italian physicist and astronomer who constructed the first thermometer and telescope; with the latter he discovered the satellites of Jupiter. **the same thing:** "Thus in the calendar of the Church Festivals the discovery of the true cross by Helen, mother of

Constantine, is recorded (and one might think — with the express consciousness of sarcasm) as the *Invention* of the cross." (De Quincey.) **central intellect**: All mechanical wonders carry us back to marvel at the human mind that evolved them, as all natural wonders lead us to the contemplation of the Maker of the universe. **vast distances**: "One case was familiar to mail-coach travellers, where two mails in opposite directions, north and south, starting the same minute from points six hundred miles apart, met almost constantly at a particular bridge which bisected the total distance." (De Quincey.)

## PAGE 28

**Apocalyptic vials**: cf. Rev. xvi, 1–18. **Trafalgar**: the victory of Lord Nelson over the French and Spanish fleets off Cape Trafalgar, in 1805, — a success which broke the naval power of France. This was the crisis which prompted Nelson's words, "England expects every man to do his duty." **Salamanca**: a town in Spain, the scene of Wellington's victory in 1812 over the allies of Napoleon. **Vittoria**: a Spanish town where Wellington again defeated the French in 1813. **Waterloo**: the Belgian field where, June 18, 1815, Wellington met Napoleon for the final struggle. The English lost heavily the first part of the day, but finally, recruited by Blücher and his Prussian troops, they completely routed the French. Many a name of square or bridge and many a monument in London — as Waterloo Bridge, Trafalgar Square with its column in memory of Nelson, the Guards' Memorial in Waterloo Place, the monument of the Duke of Wellington in St. Paul's — speaks eloquently of the "heart-shaking" suspense with which England watched the outcome of this struggle with Napoleon. **Te Deums**: see note on p. 82. **were not more beneficial**, etc.: because these victories, dealing so heavy a blow to the principle of tyranny, personified in Napoleon, meant a great stride forward in the development of a republican civilization. **five and twenty**, etc.: designated as Oriel College, Oxford, Christchurch, Oxford, etc. **the four terms**: the four periods of the college year are known now as Michaelmas, the autumn term; Hilary, which De Quincey calls *Lent*, the winter term; Easter, the spring term; Trinity, formerly called *Act* because of the *act* or *thesis* then submitted for a degree, the summer term. **the Holyhead mail**: this line connected at Holyhead with the packet for Dublin. De Quincey describes his boyhood journey to Dublin by this route in *Autobiographic Sketches*, chap. vi, latter half.

## PAGE 29

**Charles II**: reigned from 1660–1685, so De Quincey gives the custom a lifetime of nearly two centuries at the time of his writing. **quaternion**: set of four. **delf-ware**: originally Delft pottery, but the term was afterwards applied to an inferior kind of

glazed earthenware which imitated the Delft porcelain. **Pariahs:** the pariahs were one of the lowest castes of the South Hindoos, usually the serfs of the soil. Of De Quincey's love for the word Masson says: "No reader of De Quincey but must have observed how frequent and important a word in his vocabulary is the word *Pariah*, meaning social outcast, and what a hold had been taken of his imagination by the idea that an immense proportion of the men and women of the world in all ages and all lands had belonged to the class of Pariahs." Cf. *Autobiographic Notes*, pp. 113-122 (Boston Edition). **salle-à-manger:** *dining-room*.

## PAGE 30

**snobs:** "*snobs* and its antithesis *nobs* arose among the internal factions of shoemakers perhaps ten years later. Possibly enough the terms may have existed much earlier; but they were then first made known, picturesquely and effectively, by a trial at some assizes which happened to fix the public attention." (De Quincey.)

## PAGE 31

**Great wits jump:** *i. e.* agree: cf. Shakespeare's line, "They *jump* not on a just account;" *Othello* I, iii, 5. **Lord Macartney:** appointed by George III as the first ambassador to China in 1792. **jury-reins:** temporary reins; cf. jury-mast, one made to take the place temporarily of the regular mast broken or carried away.

## PAGE 32

**Fo, Fo, . . . Fi, Fi, . . . first lord of the treasury**, etc.: all these terms are used to make a burlesque of the amusing spectacle. "This paragraph is a caricature of a story told in Staunton's *Account of the Earl of Macartney's Embassy to China in 1792*." (Masson.) **Ça ira:** *it will go or it will succeed*; the refrain of one of the rallying songs of the French Revolution. It is said that it was suggested to the French by Franklin's saying of the American Revolution, "Ça ira!" **Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's:** all three are prominent philosophers in the history of ethics. Aristotle taught the beauty of living in the mean between all extremes; Zeno founded the Stoic school; Cicero's work which De Quincey probably has in mind is *De Officiis* (Of Duties). **hustings:** the platform on which candidates for Parliament used to stand in addressing the electors. **British Museum:** the celebrated museum of London, containing wonders too numerous to mention. Among them the most famous, perhaps, are the library, including all the rare old books taken from the monasteries by Henry VIII and the thousands of volumes placed there by Georges III and IV; original manuscripts; the Elgin marbles; the Rosetta Stone; the Egyptian and Assyrian art collections.

## PAGE 33

**noters, protesters:** those who refuse to accept a note or draft. **posse:** *posse comitatus* is the legal term for the band of assistants

which may be summoned by a sheriff. **blunderbuss**: literally, a *thunder box*; a shotgun with a bore large enough to hit the mark without a careful aim. **Van Troil's Iceland**: "The allusion to a well-known chapter in Van Troil's work, entitled, 'Concerning the snakes in Iceland.' The entire chapter consists of these six words,—'There are no snakes in Iceland.'" (De Quincey.) **parliamentary rat**: in English politics the term *rat* is applied to one who for personal interests deserts his party. **forbidden seat**: "The very sternest code of rules was enforced upon the mails by the Post Office. Throughout England, only three outsiders were allowed, of whom one was to sit on the box; none, under any pretext, to come near the guard; an indispensable caution, since else, under the guise of passenger, a robber might—by any one of a thousand advantages which sometimes are created, but always are favored, by the animation of frank social intercourse—have disarmed the guard. Beyond the Scottish border, the regulation was so far relaxed as to allow of *four* outsiders, but not relaxed at all as to the mode of placing them. One, as before, was seated on the box, and the other three on the front of the roof, with a determinate and ample separation from the little insulated chair of the guard. This relaxation was conceded by way of compensating to Scotland her disadvantages in point of population. England, by the superior density of her population, might always count upon a large fund of profits in the fractional trips of chance passengers riding for short distances of two or three stages. In Scotland, this chance counted for much less, and therefore, to make good the deficiency, Scotland was allowed a compensatory profit upon one *extra* passenger." (De Quincey.) **laesa majestas**: *high treason*. **Jam proximus ardet Ucalegon**:—

"Down falls the palace of Deiphobus  
Amid the conquering flames; Ucalegon  
Next burns. The broad Ligeian waves reflect  
The fiery glow."

*Aeneid*, ii, 311–313, Cranch's translation.

#### PAGE 34

**Coptic**: the ancient Egyptian language was Coptic in hieroglyphics. **Booked**: the ticket office is the *booking office* in England. **benefit of clergy**: the exemption of the clergy from criminal process before a secular court. The privilege was based upon the authority of 1 Chron. xvi, 22, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." It was abolished in the reign of George IV. **systole and diastole**: the contraction and expansion of the heart and arteries. **Quarter Sessions**: in English law a general court of criminal jurisdiction held quarterly in the different counties.



## PAGE 35

**false echoes of Marengo:** "Yes, false! for the words ascribed to Napoleon, as breathed to the memory of Desaix, never were uttered at all. They stand in the same category of theatrical fiction as the cry of the foundering line-of-battleship Vengeur, as the vaunt of General Cambronne at Waterloo, 'La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas' (The guard dies, but does not surrender), or as the repartees of Talleyrand." (De Quincey.) Napoleon won the battle of Marengo in 1800 after the capture of Milan, and all fortresses south of the Po immediately surrendered to him. **a fortiori:** with still stronger reason. **Brummagem:** the name applied to inferior metallic articles made in imitation of the genuine ones: the vulgar pronunciation of Birmingham: "false, fleeting, perjured" recalls Shakespeare's "false, fleeting, perjured Clarence;" *Richard III*, I, iv, 55. **Luxor:** see note on p. 87. **jacobinical:** revolutionary; the word is derived from the Jacobins of the French Revolution, who held their meetings in the Jacobin convent in Rue St. Jacques in Paris.

## PAGE 36

**Which they upon the adverse faction wanted:** cf.

"Besides the King's name 's a tower of strength,  
Which they upon the adverse party want."

*Richard III*, V, iii, 12-13.

**omrahs:** the Indian term for court grandees. **Agra:** a city of Hindostan. **Lahore:** a city of the Punjab.

## PAGE 37

**Roman pearls:** imitations made very perfect by a careful process. **The Welshman doubted:** De Quincey is laughing at the Welshman's lack of humor; and is referring to chapter 18 of the 6th of Edward Longshanks (Edward I) to continue the joke, inasmuch as that statute has only fifteen chapters. **alien evidence:** that of an on-looker. **Non magna loquimur**, etc.: *we do not boast (speak) great things, but we do (live) them.*

## PAGE 38

**Salamanca:** see note on p. 89. **Nile:** the battle at Aboukir in 1798, in which the English fleet under Nelson annihilated the French under Napoleon. **pot-walloppings:** the word is purely onomatopoeitic. **Marlborough forest:** in Wiltshire on the coach road between London and Bath.

## PAGE 39

**wore the Royal livery:** "The general impression was that the Royal livery belonged by right to the mail coachmen as their professional dress. But that was an error. To the guard it *did* belong, I believe, and was obviously essential as an official warrant, and as a means of instant identification for his person, in

the discharge of his important public duties. But the coachman, and especially if his place in the series did not connect him immediately with London and the General Post Office, obtained the scarlet coat only as an honorary distinction after long (or, if not long, trying and special) service." (De Quincey.) **Ulysses:** "He, just as long as he had arrows to defend him, shot down a suitor in the hall with every aim, and side by side they fell. . . . He found them all laid low in blood and dust, and in such numbers as the fish which fishermen draw to the shelving shore out of the foaming sea in meshy nets." (*Odyssey*, Bk. xxi, Palmer's translation.) The whole story of the slaying of the suitors may be found in Books xxi and xxii.

## PAGE 40

"Say, all our praises, etc.:" cf. Pope's Epistle III, *Of the Use of Riches*, ll. 249-250.

"But all our praises why should lords engross?  
Rise, honest Muse! and sing the Man of Ross."

**turrets:** "As one who loves and venerates Chaucer for his unrivalled merits of tenderness, of picturesque characterization, and of narrative skill, I noticed with great pleasure that the word *torettes* is used by him to designate the little devices through which the reins are made to pass. This same word, in the same exact sense, I heard uniformly used by many scores of illustrious mail-coachmen to whose confidential friendship I had the honor of being admitted in my younger days." (De Quincey.) However, in *The Knight's Tale* Chaucer uses the word *torets* in "torets fyled rounde" to mean a different thing, namely, the swivels for fastening the leash to a dog's collar.

## PAGE 41

**the time of the Pharaohs:** a time dating as far back as the days of the patriarch Abraham. **Mr. Waterton:** "Had the reader lived through the last generation, he would not need to be told that some thirty or thirty-five years back, Mr. Waterton, a distinguished country gentleman of ancient family in Northumberland, publicly mounted and rode in top-boots a savage old crocodile that was restive and very impertinent, but all to no purpose. The crocodile jibbed and tried to kick, but vainly. He was no more able to throw the squire than Sinbad was to throw the old scoundrel who used his back without paying for it, until he discovered a mode (slightly immoral, perhaps, though some think not) of murdering the old fraudulent jockey, and so circuitously of unhorsing him." (De Quincey.) **slow coach:** in the sense of a *lumbering fellow*; a pun which De Quincey enjoys.

## PAGE 42

**lovely households:** "Roe-deer do not congregate in herds like the fallow or the red deer, but by separate families, parents and chil-

dren, which feature of approximation to the sanctity of human hearths, added to their comparatively miniature and graceful proportions, conciliate to them an interest of peculiar tenderness, supposing even that this beautiful creature is less characteristically impressed with the grandeurs of savage and forest life." (De Quincey.) **a period of about ten years:** 1805–1815. **Titans:** the fabled giants of mythology, children of Heaven and Earth, who, being confined in Tartarus, piled mountains upon mountains to climb back again into heaven. **baubling:** insignificant (obsolete). **audacity:** "such the French accounted it." (De Quincey.)

## PAGE 43

**Lombard Street:** so named from the Lombard merchants of the Middle Ages who, before the time of Edward II, had established themselves there as bankers. The street is still a great banking centre. **at that time:** "I speak of the era previous to Waterloo." (De Quincey.) **General Post Office:** was removed from Lombard Street in 1825 to occupy the site of the old university and church of St. Martin's-le-Grand. **Attelage:** team, including vehicle and horses.

## PAGE 44

**Badajoz:** the English three times during the Peninsular War besieged it, and finally took it under Wellington in 1812. **three hundred:** "Of necessity, this scale of measurement to an American, if he happens to be a thoughtless man, must sound ludicrous." (De Quincey.)

## PAGE 45

**infinite London:** a figure of speech that comes very near being literal. **Barnet:** a market town of Hertfordshire about eleven miles north of London.

## PAGE 46

**containing the gazette:** the official announcement of the great victory.

## PAGE 47

**fey:** literally, according to its Anglo-Saxon derivation, *fated* or *doomed*; more remotely it must be applied to a person in any exaggerated mood. **glittering laurels:** "I must observe that the color of *green* suffers almost a spiritual change and exaltation under the effect of Bengal lights." (De Quincey.) **Talavera:** the scene of the victory of Wellington and the Spanish ally Cuesta over the French in 1809. **Peninsular army:** the term was applied to the English army in Spain.

## PAGE 48

**aceldama:** the Aceldama was, according to legend, the Potter's Field south of Jerusalem, bought with the money which Judas accepted for betraying Christ, hence called the "field of blood." De Quincey uses the word here to describe the battlefield.

## THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

## PAGE 49

**Cæsar, the Dictator:** according to the story told by both Plutarch and Suetonius, Cæsar, on the day before his death, at a feast at the house of Marcus Lepidus, expressed his desire for sudden and unexpected death.

## PAGE 50

*βιαθάνατος*: the nearest Greek to this form seems to be *βιαιοθάνατος*, *one who dies a violent death*; a treatise by John Donne, however, bears De Quincey's form for its title; and the meaning of the word is perfectly clear, although its form is not classical.

## PAGE 52

**"Nature from her seat,"** etc.: cf. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bk. ix. ll. 782-784: —

"Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat  
Sighing through all her works gave sign of woe,  
That all was lost."

## PAGE 53

**jus dominii:** the right of ownership. **jus gentium:** the law of nations.

## PAGE 54

**"Monstrum horrendum,"** etc.: Virgil's *Æneid*, iii, 658. De Quincey furnishes the translation in his following words. The allusion is to Polyphemus the Cyclops, whose eye was put out by Ulysses. **Calendars:** the three princes, each of whom had lost his right eye, disguised as begging friars. **Al Sirat:** the bridge swinging over Hell, leading from Earth to Paradise, according to Mahometan teaching. It was pictured as narrower than a sword's edge, so those encumbered by load of sin could scarcely hope to cross it safely.

## PAGE 55

**called me procrastinating:** to such a fault De Quincey's publisher, Mr. Hogg, could have well borne witness. **confluent:** "Suppose a capital Y (the Pythagorean letter). Lancaster is at the foot of this letter; Liverpool at the top of the right branch; Manchester at the top of the left; proud Preston at the centre, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches; it is twenty-two miles along the stem, — viz., from Preston in the middle to Lancaster at the root. There's a lesson in geography for the reader." (De Quincey.)

## PAGE 56

**the whole Pagan Pantheon:** all the gods of pagan mythology together. **Seven atmospheres of sleep:** it would be rather hard to count up the requisite seven periods of sleep unless, as Dr. Hart suggests, "the three nights plus the three days, plus the present

night, equal seven." Probably it is the association of the number seven that compels De Quincey to use it here.

PAGE 57

**Lilliputian Lancaster:** as the Lilliputians were but pygmies in comparison with Gulliver, so Lancaster was but an insignificant town in comparison with Liverpool or Manchester. **Twice in the year:** "There were at that time only two assizes even in the most populous counties, — viz., the Lent assizes and the summer assizes." (De Quincey.) **On this occasion, etc.:** it is interesting to *hear* the hush which De Quincey has suggested by the use of *s* in the descriptive sentences of this paragraph. **sigh-born thoughts:** "I owe the suggestion of this word to an obscure remembrance of a beautiful phrase in 'Giraldus Cambrensis' (a Welsh historian), — viz., *suspiriosae cogitationes*." (De Quincey.) **my own native county:** De Quincey, it will be recalled, was born near Manchester.

PAGE 58

**orchestral part:** the single note of each part made up an orchestral harmony, or the "state of unity" referred to below.

PAGE 59

**wrong side of the road:** "According to the English custom they should have been upon the left side *from us*; it is true that, according to the law of the case as established by legal precedents, all carriages were required to give way before Royal equipages, and therefore before the mail as one of them. But this only increased the danger, as being a regulation very imperfectly made known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing the movements on both sides." (De Quincey.) **quartering:** this is the technical word, probably derived from the French *cartayer*, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

PAGE 61

**the shout of Achilles:**

"Thrice o'er the breach Achilles shouted : thrice  
The men of Troy and their renowned allies  
Fell into wild disorder."

(*Iliad*, xviii, 285-287, Bryant's translation.)

**aided by Pallas:**

"And Pallas, from the host, returned his shout."

(*Iliad*, xviii, 271.)

**a shilling a day:** the pay of a soldier in the standing army.

#### DREAM-FUGUE

PAGE 65

**Whence the sound, etc.:** *Paradise Lost*, Bk. xi, ll. 558-563.  
**averted signs:** "I read the courses and changes of the lady's agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures; but it must

be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile imperfectly." (De Quincey.) **woman's Ionic form:** according to Vitruvius, the Ionic column, using the female figure as a standard, was made eight times its thickness in height; whereas the Doric order took the proportion of six to one, copying after the male figure.

PAGE 66

**corymbi:** clusters of flowers or fruit.

PAGE 69

**Minster:** cathedral. **Campo Santo:** "It is probable that most of my readers will be acquainted with the history of the *Campo Santo* (or cemetery) at Pisa, composed of earth brought from Jerusalem for a bed of sanctity, as the highest prize which the noble piety of crusaders could ask or imagine. To readers who are unacquainted with England, or who (being English) are yet unacquainted with the cathedral cities of England, it may be right to mention that the graves within-side the cathedrals often form a flat pavement over which carriages and horses *might* run; and perhaps a boyish remembrance of one particular cathedral, across which I had seen passengers walk and burdens carried, as about two centuries back they were through the middle of St. Paul's in London, may have assisted my dream." (De Quincey.)

PAGE 70

**from Cr  cy to Trafalgar:** cf. notes on p. 79 and p. 89.

PAGE 71

**horns of the altar:** cf. "Joab caught hold on the horns of the altar" (1 Kings ii, 28). **Sanctus:** an anthem beginning with the words Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus (*Holy holy, holy*).

The following appeared in De Quincey's introduction (1855) to that volume of his collected works which contained *The English Mail-Coach*.

"**The English Mail-Coach:** Thirty-seven years ago, or rather more, accident made me, in the dead of night, and of a night memorably solemn, the solitary witness to an appalling scene, which threatened instant death, in a shape the most terrific, to two young people whom I had no means of assisting, except in so far as I was able to give them a most hurried warning of their danger; but even *that* not till they stood within the very shadow of the catastrophe, being divided from the most frightful of deaths by scarcely more, if more at all, than seventy seconds.

"Such was the scene, such in its outline, from which the whole of this paper radiates as a natural expression. The scene is circumstantially narrated in Section the Second, entitled 'The Vision of Sudden Death.'



"But a movement of horror and of spontaneous recoil from this dreadful scene naturally carried the whole of that scene, raised and idealized, into my dreams, and very soon into a rolling succession of dreams. The actual scene, as looked down upon from the box of the mail, was transformed into a dream, as tumultuous and changing as a musical fugue. This troubled dream is circumstantially reported in Section the Third, entitled 'Dream-Fugue upon the Theme of Sudden Death.' What I had beheld from my seat upon the mail, — the scenical strife of action and passion, of anguish and fear, as I had there witnessed them moving in ghostly silence; this duel between life and death narrowing itself to a point of such exquisite evanescence as the collision neared, — all these elements of the scene blended, under the law of association, with the previous and permanent features of distinction investing the mail itself, which features, at that time, lay — first, in velocity unprecedented; secondly, in the power and beauty of the horses; thirdly, in the official connection with the government of a great nation; and fourthly, in the function, almost a consecrated function, of publishing and diffusing through the land the great political events, and especially the great battles during a conflict of unparalleled grandeur. These honorary distinctions are all described circumstantially in the First or introductory section, 'The Glory of Motion.' The first three were distinctions maintained at all times; but the fourth and grandest belonged exclusively to the war with Napoleon; and this it was which most naturally introduced Waterloo into the dream. Waterloo, I understood, was the particular feature of the 'Dream-Fugue' which my censors were least able to account for. [Some critics had professed their inability to apprehend the meaning of the essay.] Yet surely Waterloo, which, in common with every other great battle, it had been our special privilege to publish all over the land, most naturally entered the Dream under the license of our privilege.

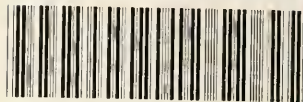
"So far as I know, every element in the shifting movements of the dream derived itself either primarily from the incidents of the actual scene, or from secondary features associated with the mail. For example, the cathedral aisle derived itself from the mimic combination of features which grouped themselves together at the point of approaching collision, namely an arrow-like section of the road, six hundred yards long, under the solemn lights described, with lofty trees meeting overhead in arches. The guard's horn again — a humble instrument in itself — was yet glorified as the organ of publication for so many great national events. And the incidents of the Dying Trumpeter, who rises from a marble bas-relief, and carries a marble trumpet to his marble lips for the purpose of warning the female infant, was doubtless secretly suggested by my own imperfect effort to seize the guard's horn and to blow a warning blast."



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